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STATESMAN

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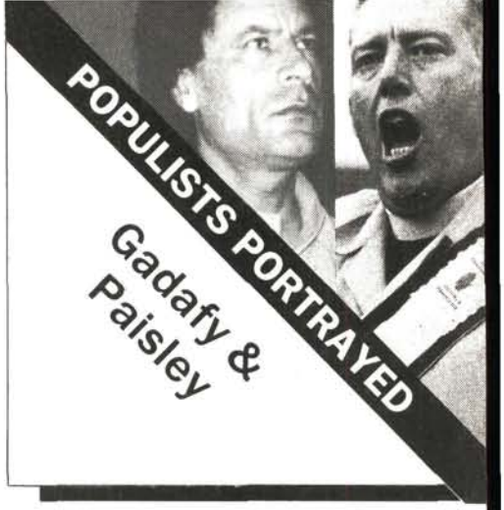
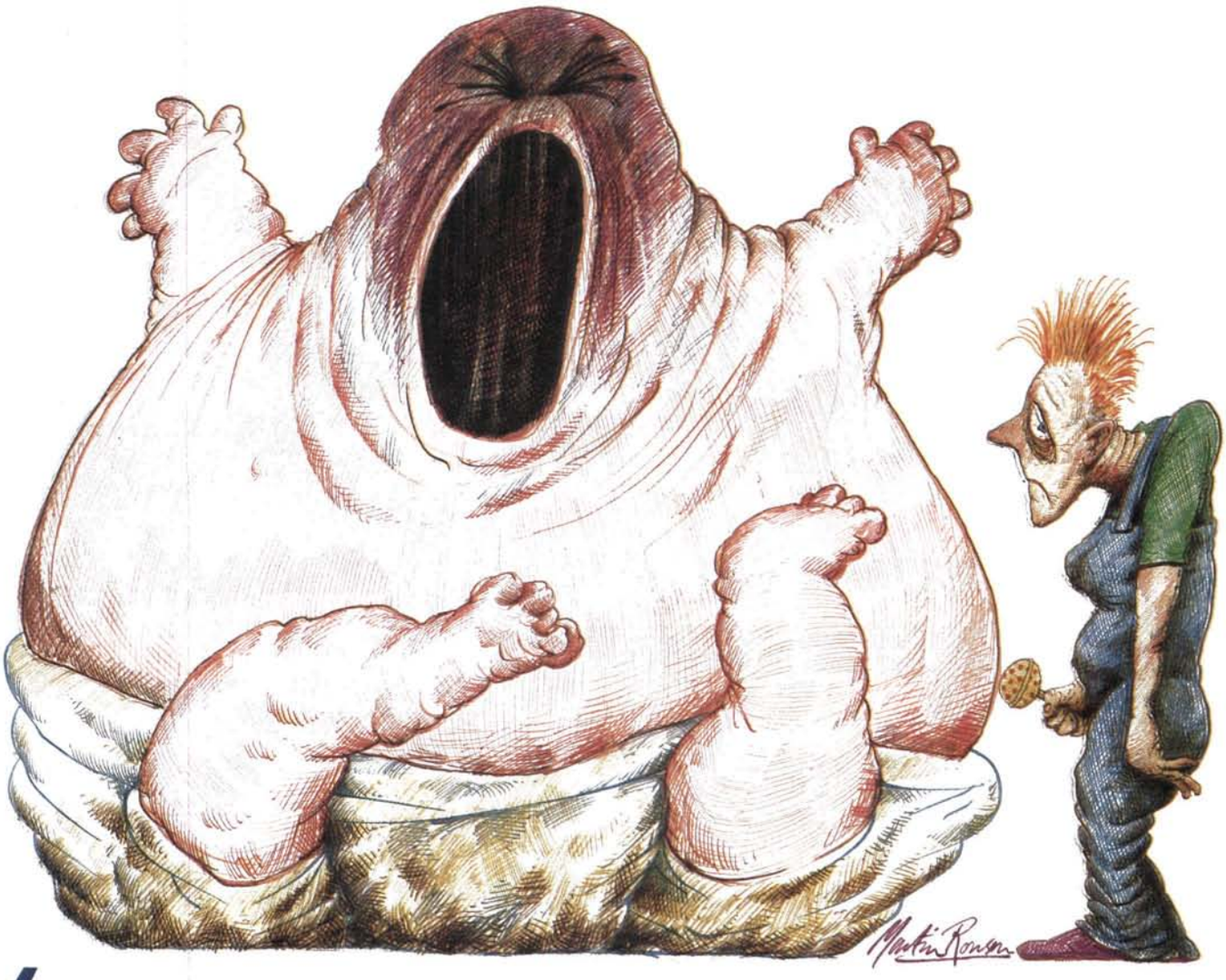
NS's own New Year's honours list
Battle of the orchestras; Mystery of the Ranters



BABY TALK

Feminists rethink motherhood



"Those feminists now suggesting that it is motherhood . . . which holds the key to women's happiness . . . are endorsing a worrying retreat from public political struggle"

Illustration: Martin Rowson

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"ART seems to me to be the most universal religion of our time, and the artist its principal messenger. The artist is a witness of his time, but he can also be an accuser, a critic, or he can celebrate in his works the uneasy greatness of his day ....."

FRANS MASEREEL

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NEW STATESMAN

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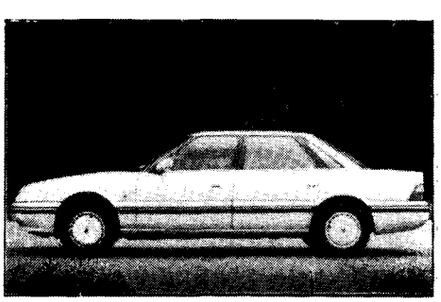

Can BL survive as the Rover Group? Can nuclear power be phased out? And can the West German social democrats win the general election there later this month?
Plus
Peter Kellner returns from holiday.

Power to the people

THE weakness of British trade unionism has become an axiom on the left. Except at a propagandist level, that is no longer seen as a simple effect of 'Thatcherism': a numerical decline largely due to unemployment, the continuing shrinkage of manufacturing industry, the increasing scope and flexibility of international capital, the pressure of the low-wage economies, the greater salience of sexual and racial divisions and groups, all have a life independent of any government, however much it may affect them.

This 'end of corporatism' is, further, being seen as giving way to a new brand of left politics, based on a coalition of groups and interests which are anti-Conservative but not predominantly working-class or necessarily socialist. So Scott Lash and John Urry, writing in the current issue of *New Socialist*, conclude that 'we think that the left may have to say farewell to the working class as traditionally conceived, in a way not wholly different from that in which it has been bid farewell in the US. But for many interests and groups, a Britain more like the US would probably have been to their benefit. The position of black and other minority groups, that of women, that of various consumer and community groups, has changed much more positively in the US than in most Western European countries over the past couple of decades. It may be that American liberalism and the lack of a nationally organised socialist movement has actually been more in their interest'.

That goes very far indeed; it neglects the very large contributions made by US trade unions, particularly those influenced by socialist ideas, to integrate blacks into the northern industrial working class in the post war period: it seems to suggest that 'nationally organised socialism' is always and everywhere tardy in responding to the claims of ethnic and women's groups. But is it right in essence — that we have to say farewell to the working class 'as traditionally conceived'?

That traditional conception, in the UK, has centrally included the trade unions: and we can scarcely say farewell to a movement which claims (with some inflation) between 9 and 10m members. It includes a conception of class: and there is plenty of surviving evidence of class division and discrimination, in housing, in education, in health, in newspaper reading habits, in culture. It includes, on the political front, a view of Labour as a movement whose base is the unions — and the Labour Party, as it will become painfully aware yet again in an election year, needs that economic base at least as much as ever, and still takes some 80 per cent of its revenue from it.

There is a danger, in reflecting on the decline of organised labour, in running ahead of real social change. The definition of self according to some notion of class remains, often more powerful than other competing definitions: a black male telecommunications engineer, for example, has more possibilities of real life comradeship with his white colleagues than with a black barrister (to whom the same applies). There is no inherent quality of skin colour or sex which makes their possessors more benign in power or more restrained in wealth than white males. A new kind of socialism — what Lush and Urry call 'radical individualism' — does not have the social base to conjure away the old class divisions yet, if ever.

The loss of political and social power by unions cannot be seen as a proxy for the ending of a working-class consciousness: nor is that class's refusal to act as socialist intellectuals would like the opening to construct a rainbow coalition of groups as inchoate as 'consumers' (isn't that everybody?) and 'communities' (isn't that everybody too?). Socialism's survival and regeneration has to be based on a conception of society in which equality and social justice are again given pre-eminence: 'radical individualism' sounds too much like what we have now. □

The passing of one nation

THE MOST famous death of the Christmas season was Lord Stockton: he became an unlikely cult figure of the left in his 'second career' as grand old man of politics, and in his graceful and mordant criticism of two nation Thatcherism ('selling off the family silver' and 'the new economics, sprung from who knows where — some said America and some Tibet'). One nation Toryism, of which he was the most distinguished exponent, was a stream which carried along others like Lord Avon (Anthony Eden) and Rab Butler; it survives in rather dispirited form in Heath, Prior and Gilmour.

Its elevation to cult status by the left is a little ironic, since it was rerided from most of its active life as a sham and a cover for the maintenance of privilege, which in part it was: both Hugh Gaitskill and Harold Wilson derided Macmillan as a poseur. There is no question of the depth of his commitment to a vision of a society in which unemployment and poverty would be progressively removed by essentially social democratic economic policies: but the social base and attitudes by which such a vision could be usher in by an enlightened ruling class has probably gone. □

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For services rendered

The* New Statesman *gleefully fits the Right name to the Right category in our own Honours List for '87

1987 will be the year when the virtues of the New England will finally come into their own. The fundaments of Christianity will again govern public life in proper partnership with the Royal City. Honours will be honours, men will be men and the NHS will be the Wrath of God plc (flotation next March).

Gone are the days when Baron Wilson of Rievaulx (what a give-away, that 'aulx') could drag public virtues into the cesspit. Here are the days when Mrs Denis Thatcher (yes, once our schools taught even a miner's son how to address married women) rewards the great and the good with peerages and the great and the good reward themselves with new directorships. So in 1987:

OUT GO

- John Moore who predicted privatisation would not work if the old utilities remained monopolies
- Nigel Lawson for dithering over tax cuts
- Tony Newton, DHSS minister, for pussyfooting on the Social Security Bill and 'equality for women' in the NHS

IN COME

- An Eye for an Eye plc, once the police forces have been streamlined
- Render Unto Caesar plc allowing new freedom of opportunity in the old Inland Revenue
- and a clutch of new companies — Blessed be the Poor plc, Talent Parables & Co, Made in God's Image plc — to sweep aside the old bureaucracies of the DHSS, social services and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

But don't rush in now with your applications to be chairmen of these companies. An ability to make a lot of money comes second in the New England; as Mrs Thatcher has shown with characteristic consistency over the last six years, the top rewards go to those who with the best track record in giving time or money to the organisations which seek to stamp out every last manifestation of that virus which threatens to destroy English life, viz Scotland, Ireland and loony left councils.

Stop for a moment and give praise for these Lords and Ladies who have restored lustre to our civic life: Ralph Harris, founder of the Institute of Economic Affairs, prophet in the wilderness, brave pioneer of the crusade against the creeping State — a prompt peerage in 1979. Humble Max Beloff who in his time has been a director of the Institute for the Study of Conflict in its unremitting war against international communism, of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), founded by Margaret Thatcher, Keith Joseph and Nigel Vinson, of the Ross McWhirter foundation, and in a bold blow against the falling standards of state Universities, principal of the only private University, of Buckingham — knighted in 1980, he was swiftly topped up to a Lord the very next year.

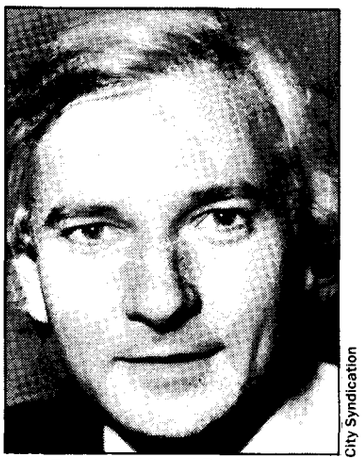
Thomas Boardman, who went from being a director of Aims of Industry, indefatigable in its defence of private ownership against subversives — he received his peerage in 1980 *before* becoming treasurer of the Conservative Party. And for one of the most remarkable rises to fame and fortune — Caroline Cox who won her spurs fighting Marxists in North London polytechnic and has been honoured with a peerage, and the position of trustee of the Social Affairs Unit, persistent evangelist for the link between private enterprise and Christian virtue, and also a director of the CPS.

As well as being the most generous of donors to right causes, William Cayzer, ennobled in 1982, has been an illustrious director of the CPS and the Economic League which still does sterling work identifying subversives, and Frank Taylor, also honoured with a peerage in 1982, who has been a generous patron of youthful Conservatives as well as being a director of Aims and on the management committee of another exposer of the socialist virus, the Freedom Association. And the man who worked quietly with little public acclaim for long years, Nigel Vinson, once a director of the CPS, of Aims of Industry and a trustee of the IEA — finally a proper Lord in 1985.

And now we can make our nominations for this year's honours.

For the most imaginative use of public money

Nominated: Nicholas Ridley, Environment Secretary, for distributing £70 billion in grants to local councils when this was technically illegal. But as he grudgingly admitted, he had Michael Heseltine to thank for it.



City Syndication

Lord Proctor of Small Business

Further entrants: it's hard to choose between NM Rothschild, the merchant bank, and Young and Rubicam, the advertising agency, which between them took £25 million from the public to take British Gas from the public and give it to a much more select group of people. But a Mr Bernard Ingham suggested that you can't be too careful just now about a name like Rothschild so the honour goes to John Banks, head of the UK end of Young and Rubicam. His 'Don't tell Sid' campaign succeeded in making the applicants for Gas shares more select than before the campaign started, a good augury for his hopes of getting the Tory Party advertising contract.

For Christian charity

Those who nominated Lord Hanson, Taylor and Cayzer didn't get the point; no further honours can be heaped on those chairmen whose companies are such consistent givers to political charities. Our other nominees prefer to give through Lights Under a Bushel Ltd (reg Liechtenstein), so this year we give the award to the Charity Commissioners themselves, who have been so generous in their intepretation of when a political trust is in fact a charity for tax purposes.

For Family values

Quite overwhelmed this year as almost every constituency with a Conservative MP, especially a Deputy Party Chairman wanted to nominate its own member. But they belong to the old Britain when Christian virtues and the spirit of free enterprise were thought incompatible so they can get stuffed.

Most of the rest were for members of the Guinness family whose exemplary family life ranges from loyalty to their business to the filial loyalty of Jonathan Guinness, ex MP, ex Chairman of the Monday Club, to his mother Lady Mosley and paternal duty to his son Sebastian 'Young man, you had everything' Guinness in his recent brush with the anachronistically restrictive drug laws.

However, the Guinnesses are sure to pop up again so by common consent the award this year goes to Conservative MP John Browne. For almost getting his ex-wife put in jail (after she divorced him for adultery), for not paying him £49,000 of the £175,000 the court instructed her to settle on him he demonstrated a fine understanding of love of money, of revenge and of law. He's got the point.

For services to small business

Showing that with a little bit of deregulation in the fields of drugs and sexual services those unemployed moaning minnies could find there's no shortage of buyers, we've had a lot of nominations in this category too. It's true that most come from the old class of property owners, but they've had more practice at it. Runners up were Sebastian Guinness, and the Marquess of Blandford. Ex Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party Jeffrey Archer was disqualified; his services to the circulation of the big business *News of the World*

UPP

Peter Bruinvels, pipped to the post by James 'Christian' Anderton

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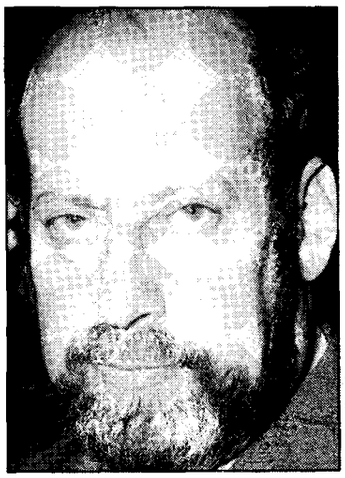

City Syndication

'If Clement Freud supported fresh air a lot of people would stop breathing'

disqualified him. That left Harvey Proctor, Conservative MP for Billericay, beating them all.

For contributions to civilised values

A late entrant was Tory councillor Bill Brownhill whose final solution for carriers of the Aids virus was 'to gas 90 per cent of queers.' Well that'll take care of a few of the Conservative government and for that reason it was vetoed.

Peter Bruinvels was again a strong contender for showing that crusading for family values need not stand in the way of a open market for Page 3 girls (those who don't read the *Sun* may have missed his masterful mockery of frumpish Clare Short's attack on teenage models). But Bruinvels, promising to introduce a bill for harsher prison sentences next year, has already won an award for his assurance that he would personally kill convicted criminals, in the name of Christian values.

So he was pipped to the post by James Anderton, not just for holding firm while the Stalker affair raged around him but also for his clear vision of how to eliminate the cesspit of degenerates into which the lack of Christian values will plunge us. And that will take care of Scotland.

For patriotism

A long running contender for this award since he urged Mrs Thatcher to stand as party leader and then denounced CND members for receiving Moscow gold is Sir Frederic Bennett, Conservative MP for Torbay. His party colleagues failed to understand why he was made a Privy Counsellor last year (surely a peerage would have been more appropriate?) but a quick glance at his entry in *Who's Who* reveals all. A true ambassador for British interests he has a long list of honours from lesser known foreign institutes and directorships of two companies in the Caymans. And a man with a publication entitled: *Fear is the Key: Reds under the Bed or the Enemy at the Gate — and Within* has clearly said it all.

But at the last minute the case for a genuine English eccentric was overwhelming: come back Peter Wright who in his stirring cry 'no-one is more patriotic than I' routed the old corruptibles of the Foreign Office. This is the man for whom Rupert Brooke would have written 'There is a corner in some foreign field' etc etc.

Services to the arts

The gradual elimination of subversion in the arts in Britain makes this rather a superfluous award. There were still some faint-hearted nominations for Sirs Peter Hall and Trevor Nunn for showing that private enterprise can flourish beside State subsidy. But really those boys should put their mouths where their money is. Other nominations were for Kingsley Amis for finally giving the Booker Prize intellectual credibility and Norman Tebbit for raising standards of TV criticism to new heights.

The award goes to Charles and Doris Saatchi for showing what the judicious use of a private income can do for the art world. But we predict the award will not need to be made in the future.

Business in the community

One nominee. Rupert Murdoch for services to docklands. One winner.

For international relations

For sheer consistency in bringing the plight of white South Africans to our attention when all around were losing their heads (goodbye to your peerage, Sir Timothy Bevan of Barclays Bank): John Carlisle MP.

Services to education

Many nominations for Liberal education spokesman Clement Freud, so unpopular among fellow members of 'the best club in the world' that it has been quipped that 'if he supported fresh air a hell of a lot of people would stop breathing.' But as most of these seemed to come from David Steel they were disqualified.

Lady Cox did jolly well in her undeviating pursuit of left-wing perverts in schools but as the Honours Panel will be taken over by Made In God's Image plc, she was quietly disqualified on the grounds of sex. Sadly the same is true of Princess Michael who showed that writing your own book is not half as hard as those lefty intellectuals used to make out. A third honour in six years might seem excessive, otherwise it would have gone to Lord Beloff for being an effortless living example of his own maxims about intellectual superiority. So, for showing the same quality, it goes to Roger Scruton, who began the year with his monumentally effortless work on *Sexual Desire* and for finishing it with a logically flawless article in *The Times* proving that all left-wing people are, by very definition, 'half-educated.' (Ronald Reagan chipped in on the prize money for this one.)

And we finish with two special awards.

The Sir Alastair Burnet for devotion in the right places.

Sorry Peregrine Worsthorne, self-nomination is not allowed. Lord Tonypandy wins *nem con*.

The New Statesman award for fastest move to the right.

Initiated by Paul Johnson in 1970 for *NS* staff, it goes this year to Lord Chalfont, ex *New Statesman* defence correspondent, member of the United Kingdom Committee for a Free World. His ability to spot the international communism behind a reputable facade is surpassed only by Lord Peter Wright and the Heritage Foundation. (Alright Gerald Kaufman, ex *New Statesman* Home Affairs correspondent, your time will come.) □

NEWS

Lib gains resume

LOCAL COUNCIL by-elections returned to something like normality in November and December, with the Liberals making a significant number of gains and the Conservatives making net losses. In October, the Tories made net gains for the first time since 1983, while both Labour and the Alliance slipped.

However, the Conservatives lost fewer seats to the Alliance than was usual before this autumn — just four out of 20 seats the Tories were defending. (In fact, the Alliance made only three gains in contests between the parties, because in West Wiltshire the Tories did not field a candidate to defend their seat.) On the other side of the coin, the Conservatives gained two seats from the SDP.

Altogether 44 contests took place in November and December. The gains and losses were as follows:

	Seats defended	Seats lost	Seats gained	Seats held now
Con	20	5	2	17
Lab	9	3	2	8
Lib	7	1	9	15
SDP	2	2	2	2
Others	6	5	1	2

In 31 of the by-elections candidates from all three major political groups stood. More than 54,000 votes were cast as follows:

Conservative	23,252	42.8%
Liberal/SDP	18,514	34.1%
Labour	11,700	21.5%
Others	852	1.6%

Because of the large number of Tory seats, and small number of Labour seats, that were contested, those percentages should be treated with some caution. The degree of bias makes it difficult to offer a clear view of the national picture; but it is clear that Labour did significantly worse and the Alliance significantly better than in recent opinion polls.

One notable result for the Tories was its increased majority in Brent's Preston ward. Despite a lower turnout, the Conservative vote was only 36 down on last May, while Labour's vote fell by 253 and the Alliance's by 285.

Peter Kellner

COUNCIL SCOREBOARD

6 November

Peterborough DC	LAB GAIN (Lib)
Port Talbot DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Cardiff DC	Lab hold
Bexley LBC	Lib hold
Lewes DC	Con hold

13 November

Northavon DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Kent CC	Con hold
Gravesham DC	Con hold
Gravesham DC	Con hold
Cherwell DC	Con hold

20 November

Reigate & Banstead DC	CON GAIN (SDP)
Eastleigh DC	Lab hold
Croydon LBC	Con hold
Barnet LBC	Con hold
Harborough DC	Ind hold

27 November

Cleethorpes DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Epsom & Ewell DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Barbergh DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Annandale & Eskdale DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Hyndburn DC	CON GAIN (SDP)
Teignbridge DC	IND GAIN (Con)
Kingswood DC	Lab hold
Kirkaldy DC	Lab hold
Annandale & Eskdale DC	Lib hold
Devon CC	Con hold
Gedling DC	Con hold
Barnet LBC	Con hold
Brent LBC	Con hold
Test Valley DC	Con hold

4 December

Bearsden & Milngrove DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Isle of Wight CC	Lib hold
Bristol DC	Lib hold
Brentwood DC	Lib hold

11 December

Castle Morpeth DC	LAB GAIN (Ind)
Wyre DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
West Wilts DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Winchester DC	SDP GAIN (Ind)
Tonbridge & Malling DC	Lib hold
Lewisham LBC	Con hold
Lincs CC	Con hold
Ribble Valley DC	Con hold

18 December

Aberconwy DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Beds CC	Lab hold
Vale Royal	Lab hold

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RICHARD GRAVIL

Three steps we could take towards Utopia

'THE PROJECT for democratic socialists', Peter Kellner argues (*NS* 28 Nov.) 'is to modify capitalism'. The project for social democrats, the Limehouse Group argued in its first pamphlet, *Equality and the Ownership Question**, is to transform it. Either way, capital itself may yet see cause to collaborate.

The needy in our society cannot be supported for ever by levies upon a shrinking working population. A liberal society may not survive if there is increasing polarisation between a wealthy technocracy, and the permanently workless.

The 'crisis' thus conceived is partly hypothetical, but solutions to it could be of real social value even if the future is more benign than seems likely. If the aim of social democracy (as I believe) is to eradicate economic conditions in which the many sell their labour to the few who own capital, a general sense of breakdown may make that ideal more marketable.

In 1949, in his essay *Social Democracy in Britain*, Tawney wrote:

> Granted, in short, the past services rendered by capitalism, the time has come . . . to mobilize the resources of knowledge and public spirit required to enable us to take the next step forward.

That step was a compound of redistribution and worker-ownership. It was only partly made in the Beveridge/Attlee era, and is in need of urgent repair. The next Alliance manifesto will offer repairs. The SDP's emphasis will be on immediate reform of the tax/benefit system, so as to produce (in effect) a guaranteed minimum income. Secondly — if the leadership's commitment matches that of the Council for Social Democracy — it will offer fiscal advantages to co-operatives and employee ownership, and will ensure that profit sharing schemes qualify for tax relief only if their effect is to *reduce* differentials.

If the Alliance can repair its bridges with the trade unions, it should also attempt to create between government, TUC and CBI a corporate consensus in favour of reducing differentials in incomes at all levels. Labour's failure in this area is the worst blemish on its record. In Sweden, the flattened spread of incomes within blue-collar occupations, between shop floor and management, or between junior and senior managers, is one of the most marked (and most admired) achievements of half a century of social democracy: the will to eradicate obscene inequalities is surely the litmus test of any government of the 'left'.

The second step, in the view of the Limehouse Group, is to dissolve the public/private divide. The SDP should begin the systematic promotion of industrial co-ownership: it should legislate to ensure that all companies above a certain size devote a proportion of their profits to acquiring shares on behalf of their employees — at least until a 20 per cent holding is reached, entitling employees to be represented on their boards. An entirely co-operative economy may well (as has been argued) have inertia built in: but industrial co-ownership has a proven record in reducing industrial alienation.

At the same time, some form of social dividend will be needed to ensure that prosperity reaches the permanently unwaged — and to achieve other desirable effects, such as encouraging job sharing in areas other than the highest paid occupations, and enabling new enterprises to start up on low wage costs. In other words, social ownership 'Limehouse-style' means that even people who have no work at all derive their basic income not from the government (in the form of handouts, whether means tested or not) but in the form of a dividend on the profits of the whole economy: it takes a stage further Anthony Crosland's idea (in *The Future of Socialism*) of the two-wage worker.

The Council for Social Democracy (the SDP's standing conference) seems willing — in principle — to promote social ownership. When asked last year to endorse some neo-Lawsonian proposals for 'wider share ownership', it deleted the word 'share' from this phrase, and demanded a 'massive increase in workers' co-operatives'. More important, it threw out a half-baked idea for giving away shares in the public sector (impractical and inegalitarian in its effects) and backed a Limehouse proposal to vest public sector ownership in a Public Sector Trust, so that citizens and employees would receive dividends on their share in the public economy.

The proposal for a Public Sector Trust will not appear in the next Alliance manifesto. It has yet to be meshed into a broad industrial and social welfare strategy for the '90s. The party could (and should) decide that the Trust should accumulate holdings in the private sector, and become a full-scale 'Citizens' Trust'. This is, in effect, a nationwide unit trust with resemblances to the Swedish wage-earners' funds, but with around 10 per cent holdings across the private economy. It would have an elected board, with one function only: to distribute dividends either on a universal basis, or targeted on those groups now dependent upon welfare handouts.

The essence of all such 'Social Dividend' ideas is that of generating dividend income from the social ownership of capital; distributing it universally, or with some variations; and reclaiming it from the better-off via high rates of tax on other income.

In theory, one can achieve such redistributive objectives solely through the tax system: taxing capital ownership, inheritance, gifts, etc., and distributing the proceeds at the whim of the Chancellor. But the Citizens' Trust proposal has the great advantage that it makes the dividend-distribution process independent of revenue collection and political climate.

If this seems ambitious, the next stage is strictly utopian. It involves the equitable redistribution of all capital, and the dissolution of its agglutinative power. Surprisingly, perhaps, a mechanism for this has been proposed. It is the brainchild of an American millionaire who believes that capitalism needs to be saved from its own contradictions. His name is Stuart Speiser: his scheme is called 'SuperStock', and it works like this.

Speiser would change the underlying rules of the investment process. Under SuperStock, *companies would no longer be allowed to retain profits*. All earnings would have to be distributed in the form of dividends. Investment funds would have to derive entirely from government-guaranteed bank loans. In return, companies would issue an appropriate number of new shares, 'SuperStock', which would initially be owned by the banks (until the loan has been repaid), and ultimately by the people, on the basis of equitable distribution. It is simple, elegant, and — if you aren't a stockbroker — painless.

Had such a process begun in Britain twenty years ago, the average family would be now be receiving an *investment* income of over £3,000. This, it so happens, is just about the *total* income —almost all of it in the form of welfare benefits paid for by those lucky enough to be in work — of the poorest 20 per cent of households today. Would any political party in Britain have the nerve to call Mrs Thatcher's bluff, and develop such ideas into a genuine 'people's capitalism'? The final apotheosis of the system would, after all, be a fitting way to commemorate the bicentennial — in 1989 — of certain events in France. □

Richard Gravil is a former member of the SDP National Committee, and co-founder of the Limehouse Group

**Equality and the Ownership Question*, £2.00 from The Tawney Society, 18 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PF.

ROGER WODDIS

No questions asked

Alleged MI5 operations against the Wilson Labour Government in the 1970s and a smear campaign to discredit Lord Glenamara (then Ted Short), deputy Labour leader, are said to involve the journalist Chapman Pincher.

Whatever happened to the decent game,
The old belief in God and Bulldog Drummond?
Now all is centred on the blackened name,
The beast unleashed is anything but tame,
The watchdog keen to kill when he is
summoned.

Our masters need a state within a state,
And there are certain rules to be adjusted:
The forgers must be free to fabricate,
No questions asked, no reason for debate,
Nothing is sure and no one can be trusted.

And yet . . . suppose it's all a fiendish plot,
Not one cooked up by MI5 officials,
But some far darker poison in the pot,
Brewed by a comrade flogging tommy-rot.
What, Chapman Pincher? Look at his initials.

No prizes for spotting that the author of The Reagan on p.29 of the Christmas issue was our own Poet Laureate, Roger Woddis. Sorry Roger!

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The birth of a new *Sun*?

News on Sunday ***promised to be the first new, radical national newspaper in decades. But there's been a huge split in its senior staff.***
JOHN PILGER, ***former editor-in-chief, argues his side of it***

THERE IS a missing generation in British journalism: a phenomenon that dates from the arrival of Rupert Murdoch in Fleet Street and the birth of his tabloid, the *Sun*, in 1969. The *Sun* copied bits of the *Daily Mirror*, bits of *Reveille*, bits of *John Bull* and the old hate organs and penny dreadfuls, dressed up the lurid to look like news and called itself a newspaper, which it is not.

It is difficult to overstate the impact of Murdoch on journalism as a craft. It seems to me ironic that in the 1980s, as media technology advances, it is not the traditional means of journalism that are becoming obsolete but the honourable traditions. For some journalists these days, those who either are too young to remember a Fleet Street without Murdoch and his *Sun*, or who are *not* too young but for reasons of survival suffer from historical amnesia, the 'tabloid tradition' *is* the Murdoch style.

This 'tradition' is widely regarded in Fleet Street as immutable, as if 'the readers' will accept nothing else. This is odd, because it is fake. That there was life before Murdoch and that newspapers, in the words of A J P Taylor, 'serve their noblest purpose when they are popular newspapers', are truths mislaid in the inane jargon of 'upmarket' and 'downmarket.'

All of this was brought home to me in recent months when, as editor-in-chief of *News on Sunday*, I took part in interviewing tabloid journalists for senior production positions. Some could not envisage a mass circulation paper that was not 'bright like the *Sun*': this is, with huge tombstones of headlines, few words and fewer ideas that departed from the Murdoch orthodoxy.

One of these interviewees said he thought up the perfect *News on Sunday* headline on the way to see us. It was 'DIRTY DEN HAS AIDS' and it referred to the star of the TV soap, *EastEnders*, whose every murmur is recorded, and distorted, at the highest decibel by the *Sun* and its shadows. He described this headline as 'combining popular appeal and social awareness'. He was almost incredulous when I told him what I thought of it.

Coincidentally, the same headline appeared in the list of stories for the 'dummy' issue produced by Keith Sutton, the appointed editor of *News on Sunday*. It was this dummy, and the fact that I had no decision making powers to stop the trend it represented, that led to my resignation shortly before Christmas.

From early November Keith Sutton made clear his admiration for the *Sun*'s style, if not its content. This, he insisted, was the 'tabloid tradition' and if *News on Sunday* was to be 'successful' it would have to be 'packaged' like its salacious rivals.

Something approaching farce then developed: journalists who came to be interviewed for jobs and who inevitably enquired into what kind of paper we had in mind were given two opposite versions. From the editor, *News on Sunday* sounded for some like a 'left-wing *Sun*' or *Star* which would not have 'endless stories' about the teachers' strike and nuclear waste, as these were 'so tedious'. During an interview with one of the best reporters in Fleet Street, who was prepared to take a £6,000 salary cut to join us, Keith Sutton described the *Sun*'s famous UP YOURS GALTIERI during the Falklands war as a 'great front page'. The reporter left shaking his head 'We have got to assume', the editor said during another interview, 'that people are not desperately keen for information'.

> ***'News on Sunday was founded on the premise that people were desperately keen for information and that they were not getting it'***

News on Sunday was founded on the premise that people *were* desperately keen for information and that they were not getting it, in spite of the illusions of a 'saturation media'. It was also founded on the belief that many people wanted and had the right to a credible popular newspaper of the non-sectarian left; is there another western country where the press is so politically bent? I was one of the original founders of *News on Sunday* and the one asked to define editorially the vision we all shared: by *we* I refer particularly to Alan Hayling, the present chief executive, whose driving force has edged our dream closer to reality.

We never intended anything remotely resembling a 'left-wing *Sun*' which, in any case, is a contradiction in terms. The 'success' of the *Sun* has been to hijack the language and prejudices of ordinary people and to present British life as a nightmare. Its 'packaging' is as violent as its content; both are anti-humanity and anti-journalism.

Nor did we ever intend a '*Sunday Guardian*' nor a re-run of the *Daily Mirror* of the 1960s, as some have suggested. We were convinced that *News on Sunday* had to be an original: a lively, campaigning, investigative newspaper that would take its subjects and its readers seriously while retaining a sense of wit and irreverence missing from the populars today. Elements of *News on Sunday* might well be reminiscent of the old *Daily Mirror*, but only as a reflection of our determination to revive the lost arts of tabloid journalism: the skilled use of text with uncropped pictures; original, well written investigation which the *Sunday Times* Insight team pioneered (I count the old *Sunday Times* as a great popular newspaper); and writer-photographer teams which the *Mirror* and *Picture Post* deployed to such effect.

We envisaged a newspaper whose radical character would ensure that, unlike the old *Daily Herald*, with which *News on Sunday* is sometimes compared, it would not be tied to the unions, certainly not to the TUC; nor could any political party, or faction, claim special kinship to it. Nor would *News on Sunday* publish tracts of the left. We believed strongly that people were interested in *journalism*, not in preached politics, especially when the preachers were often cynics. This is one of the reasons, in my view, for the decline of the *Daily Mirror*, which on same days publishes leaders giving token support to the Labour Party while the broad content of the paper — that which is not given over to voyeurism and royalty — is Thatcherite (or Maxwellite).

We believed that as the paper was to compete in a press that produced some of the most sectarian newspapers in the world, a truly radical difference that would distinguish *News on Sunday* from its competitors would be a genuine attempt to separate news from comment. And we wanted to turn stereotypes inside out, to question newspaper language and all the assumptions loaded in old clichés — such as 'moderates' versus 'extremists'.

I believed that the issue of language was vital. 'Defence' was a prime example. The word itself was long ago captured by those who mean the opposite. As the attacks on the Labour Party's anti-nuclear policies become more shrill, media language will play a principal part. The government's propaganda has for too long been allowed to compare 'unilateral disarmament' with 'multilateral disarmament' when honest comparison ought to be with unilateral *armament*. I have never seen an interview with any member of the Government in which the question has been asked: why has Britian vetoed or ignored so many opportunities for 'multilateral disarmament'; over a two year period? (Britain voted for only *six* out of forty-six United Nations resolutions concerning multinational limitations on nuclear weapons). That is the kind of information and perspective that I would have wanted *News on Sunday* to sustain during an election year.

We planned a radical sports coverage, which would have provided all the usual personality columns and scoreboards but would have also campaigned on behalf of the long suffering fans: against, for example, the scandalous neglect of youngsters by the Football Association and the rich clubs, not to mention the large lavatories that are passed off as football stadiums. For this reason, I wanted *News on Sunday* to have at least four more sports pages than any other tabloid.

I especially wanted the television pages to list programmes and previews with wit, but then to explain how television's bureaucracy works and especially the British way of censorship: for instance, the banning, doctoring and delaying of forty-odd programmes about Ireland since 'the troubles' began.

The arts section would have encouraged new authors, whose books are often ignored. The section on popular music would have had nothing to do with the handout industry on which the tabloids depend. There would have been

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something for and about all the musical 'tribes' of Britain, based on a fine analysis by *News on Sunday*'s John Hoyland.

The young ought to be *News on Sunday*'s special concern. I wanted a lively 'Adult and Child' section which would discuss children's rights, at home and in care, the difficulties of adoption, what to do about nursery cuts and so on. I had a plan to involve half a dozen schools around the country in helping us draw up our kids' pages. Our letters page were to be a real forum, unlike the sub-edited fragments offered in most of the tabloids. The *Daily Mirror* Readers' Service, which Maxwell threw out was to rise to its former glory in *News on Sunday*, helping anyone who needed help with almost any difficulty, free of charge.

Positioning ourselves genuinely on the side of readers and never on the side of 'authority' was to be the paper's credo as far as I was concerned. That is hardly a radical notion; it is simply acting as a real Fourth Estate. Not long ago Walter Guzzardi, the editor of the American magazine, *Fortune*, wrote that the flow of news these days was 'essentially benign' and 'the Press has become a tremendous — and often unappreciated — force for legitimising governments, institutions and free enterprise'.

This seemed to me an important analysis, coming from such a conservative source. He was referring to America, of course, which has the freest press in the world, in theory if not in practice. By comparison, obsequiousness is a way of Press life in Britian. In the *New Statesman* recently Phillip Knightley (ex-*Sunday Times*, and one of the many fine journalists who no longer work on newspapers in Britain) wrote that British journalists were allowed to write almost anything they liked about royalty as long as they 'never write seriously and never query its existence, examine its performance or look too closely at how it functions'. *News on Sunday*, I had hoped, would do all three.

But of course these plans would be worthless abstractions if, as the present editor has said, 'people are not desperately keen for information'. Surely implicit in this belief is that ordinary people cannot be trusted with a *real* newspaper; or that the real newspaper has to be 'packaged' — i.e. disguised — in Murdoch wrapping paper. My old paper, the *Mirror*, tried to do that with not much heart, and its circulation dived. During the first two years of Maxwell's reign, when the 'packaging' became bizarre, some two million people stopped reading his titles.

As we are in Britain, there is a class element to all this. When I first came to this country to work on newspapers I was struck by distinctive attitudes that often determined journalists' regard for tabloid readers. One was a middle-class view which was at best paternalistic; another was a working-class view that expressed a proprietorial knowledge of 'the punters' and yet barely concealed a contempt for them as a rejection of roots. These attitudes are rife in tabloid offices. They were evident in the views of some of the people we interviewed for jobs. And they are implicit both in the arguments put forward for a 'left-wing *Sun*' and in the 'dummy' issue of *News on Sunday* produced on 13 December.

This was not so much a left-wing *Sun* as a characterless giveaway. That it did not trust its readers was expressed by the misuse of pages two and three — 'show' pages in any tabloid — which were dominated by the headline, SHOCK HORRORSCOPE. The story beneath was contrived nonsense about how British Telecom's astrologer might read the Pope's stars. There was a large picture of the Pope in his familiar ground-kissing position. This was described by the editor as 'irreverent' and 'funny'.

There were several good stories, notably one on breast cancer; but in a soulless paper good stories are lost. The colour magazine managed to look like an enfeebled version of the one that comes with the *News of the World*. On the other hand, the Scottish edition devoted its pages two and three to a fine story by Rob Edwards about the transport of nuclear warheads from Scotland to England on public roads; it was the one hint of what *News on Sunday* ought to be and of the potential strength of its regional editions.

Indeed, the energy and conviction of *News On Sunday*'s unique regional groups and their supporters could be a pillar of the paper's editorial, advertising and circulation; unfortunately too many of them feel shunned by the leadership and their morale is not guaranteed.

Perhaps the most intractable difficulty for *News on Sunday* is its structure, which aspires to something approaching pluralism but has managed to achieve the opposite. There is a board and a 'founders' trust. The latter is a misnomer, because most of the founders are not founders at all but appointed trustees with considerable power. The 'founders' have three representatives on the board, they had two on the panel that appointed the editor, they have one on the committee that appoints key members of the editorial staff and one on the 'product development committee' which is meant to oversee editorial policy. Most have had no experience with journalism, yet it is principally their exercise of power which has legitimised the current misdirection of the paper away from that envisaged by the true founders, such as Alan Hayling, Chris Walsh, myself and others.

They have been able to do this by exercising their power of veto against the editor's dismissal, regardless of the fact that they regarded his 'dummy' as a failure and that four out of five of those who appointed the editor agreed that they had made a serious mistake. At the end of a day of critical meetings on 16 December, one of the 'founders' made a significant little speech. The editor, she said, was clearly the wrong choice, so editorial power should not be given to him; but neither should it be given to anyone else: not to Alan Hayling, one of the original founders, nor to me, the editor-in-chief. No one, it seemed, was to be trusted.

The board of *News on Sunday* includes some attractive people of the non-sectarian left — Hilary Wainwright, Vella Pillay, Verity Lambert; but the board remained divided and ineffectual. On 16 December I waited my turn to address the board and to present alternative editorial pages and ideas which would be evidence of what the paper had originally set out to be.

As principal architect of the paper's editorial style, I had been asked to explain what had gone wrong and how it could be put right. While I waited, a 'founder' handed me a company resolution which, except for one minor change, preserved the status quo. Verdict before evidence; what I was about to say was worthless. Is this part of the 'mould breaking' that the chairman, Nicholas Horsley, referred to in his letter to *The Guardian* on 24 December?

Six days earlier Nicholas Horsley had phoned me and read out a memorandum in which he called, unequivocally, for the dismissal of the editor as vital to the paper's survival. He then wrote in the *Guardian* that the company had the 'utmost faith' in the editor. Private truths, public assurance. Are such machinations to pass for the politics of 'the first radical paper for a generation'?

Committees have failed *News on Sunday*. Committees too often draw comfort from their own procedures and mediocrity; at worst, they became cabals. And when it suits them they allow the system to be fiddled. Two senior editorial appointments were 'nodded through' to jobs that were quite wrong for them, without the unanimous approval of all of us on the interviewing panel, as we had agreed. Committees have allowed the hi-jacking of *News on Sunday*. A wise journalist friend pointed out to me the other day that one of the serious flaws in *News on Sunday*'s base was that, out of the original founders, I was the only journalist; and that had I had the support of other journalists who shared a common professional ideal, the hi-jacking — essentially a sweaty Fleet Street job — would have run into a united opposition able to recognise a takeover simply by the language being deployed: serious stories dismissed as 'luxuries' and an obsession with 'fun' in the paper, concealing plans for familiar junk.

News on Sunday's amateurs learned much about journalism, but some made the mistake of believing they had acquired inner knowledge of the craft; this, in my view, comes only from skill and experience. When I objected to several appointees on professional grounds, a sub-committee was quickly formed to sort that one out; I was not on it, nor was any other journalist. When I was appointed editor-in-chief, the company's statement invested me with 'overall editorial control'. I soon found this was illusory; when I was resigned I had no editorial powers.

Today, the strength of *News on Sunday* lies in its original founders and supporters, and in its production, marketing and circulation departments whose staff seemed to me the most committed to a radical alternative to the tabloids. Because the present editorial leadership failed to recognise this, and often contrived an aloofness, an 'anti-journalists' feeling has developed recently, along with the view that the political direction of the paper ought not to be left to journalists. I do not agree with this view, but I can sympathise with suspicions of journalists who regard politics as a 'luxury'.

News on Sunday can succeed, if the hi-jacking is stopped *now*. The ruptures of recent weeks have concentrated minds, and Alan Hayling is to 'work with the editor'. But Hayling, who more than anyone dreamt up the paper, ought to have the authority of decision-making denied to the rest of us. What he and others have achieved, since the day almost three years ago when he rang me to say he had 'an idea for a decent paper', is remarkable. They deserve to succeed, unencumbered; people need that 'decent paper'. □

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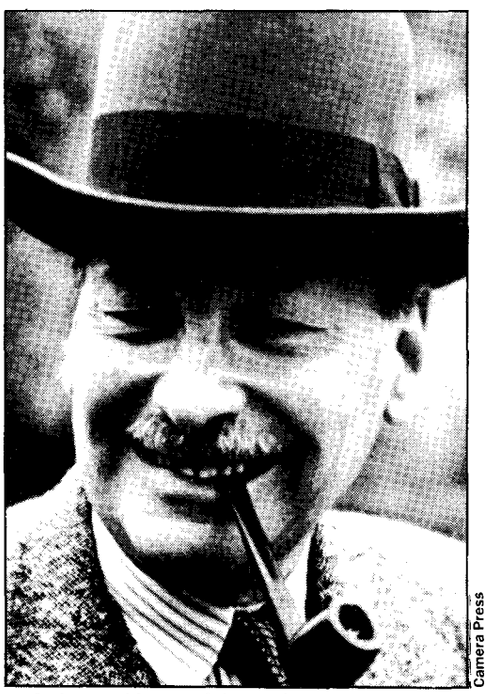
Markets, liberty and the state

In what is almost certain to be an election year, the greatest charge against the government is its central economic failure, and the human waste that has produced.

DIETER HELM ***argues that the Thatcherite appeal to economic theory must be contested***



Back to basics with William Beveridge (left) and Clement Attlee, architects of the welfare state, who realised that *imperfect* free markets guaranteed neither freedom nor efficiency

MRS THATCHER frequently bolsters her market philosophy with an appeal to its economic efficiency. Indeed it is now almost a conventional wisdom that economic and political liberty are best combined in the free market economy.

This 'minimalist view' of the role of the state was embodied in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which set a rigid framework of monetary and borrowing targets to control inflation, but abandoned any attempt to influence the level of employment through macroeconomic policies. Privatisation of state industries, the move to private health provision, education and pensions, and the 'rolling back' of the economic borders of the state supported this strategy. In the name of economic efficiency the three pillars of the post-war consensus — pragmatic intervention in industry, full employment, and the Welfare State — were directly challenged.

In contrast to the Thatcherites, the left has tended to abandon economics, and hence espoused their policies on non-economic grounds. There has been little or no attempt to take on the Thatcherite hijacking of economics on their own territory (with the notable exception of the arguments over the economic costs of pit closures).

This approach is wholly mistaken, for economic theory offers a direct critique of the government's overall philosophy, and a coherent defence of the Welfare State and the role of government in intervening in the market. Simple 'good housekeeping' and the organisation of a complex economy are quite distinct. Economic theory does not suggest the former is a good solution to the latter. The association of the free market with the properties of economic efficiency is quite wrong. Economics offers little or no support for the economic philosophy of Thatcherism.

Thatcherites claim both too much and too little from economics. Too much, because economic theory cannot actually furnish an answer to the question of where the economic borders of the state ought to lie without recourse to value judgements. Neither the 'minimalist state', nor the planned socialist economy are ultimately justified on solely narrow economic grounds.

Too little, because economic theory can inform on a number of questions. Economic theory provides an analysis of the workings of markets — of their failures and imperfections as well as their successes.

LET US consider value judgements first. Broadly speaking social objectives can be divided into three categories — efficiency, distribution and freedom. The typical value judgement that motivates much of economics is efficiency. An economy is better, the more it fulfils the preferences or wants of individuals. But such a view is neutral as between whose wants are met, and hence it can be the case that the distribution of income worsens, but efficiency rises. Furthermore, efficiency can clash with freedom, since freedom gives more weight to some preferences over others, and indeed rules out some preferences altogether.

This clash between freedom and efficiency is the cause of the fallacy of the Thatcherites who claim that a free market economy necessarily guarantees individual and political freedom. The kind of freedom that interests Mrs Thatcher is the negative sort — to be free is to be an individual not interfered with by government. The less government, the less interference, and the greater the range of free choice.

But the problem is that it is not only governments who interfere with an individual's choice. Other people frequently interfere. The rights of those who deviate from the norm of society have throughout history been oppressed by the tyranny of the majority. Large monopoly firms exploit consumers. So we need government to protect the individual against just this sort of interference. Less government often means more exploitation, and hence less freedom.

But even if 'negative freedom' were to be enhanced by less government, it is in itself a peculiarly narrow idea of what freedom is. For not only must people be protected from others, but they must also have sufficient capabilities to lead a decent life. They must have the freedom to enjoy a minimum standard of living. The kinds of capabilities individuals need include health, education, food, and housing. Providing these sorts of goods is what the Welfare State has tried to do. That they may at times clash with efficiency means that we need to carefully specify their effects. It does not mean that they are illegitimate, and non-economic.

ECONOMICS is additionally subversive of laissez faire markets as allocators of resources. Indeed, the central body of economic theory highlights their inefficiencies. The core neo-classical theory of perfect competition is a model of a perfect economy, and it serves as a benchmark against which to appraise existing imperfect markets. Only if an economy is perfect would it be safe to leave the allocation of resources in the hands of the market system (or a planned decentralised system). Thus only a perfect economy can be one in which the price mechanism can safely be given full reign. Any deviation from that perfect world

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raises the question of intervention, for the market now 'fails' to deliver the best results. Thus when Mrs Thatcher claims that private industries rather than those controlled by the state are best at allocating the country's scarce resources, she implicitly appeals to these allocative properties of the market. Only if information is perfect and costlessly available, only if products are identical in a market (no variety), only if there are no large firms with power over the prices, and so on, will this kind of assertion be unambiguously true. Once the slightest imperfection creeps in the issue becomes relative — are the distortions in the market worse than the effects of government interference to put them right?

It is important to realise just how much existing markets are riddled with imperfections. These imperfections are what economists call 'market failures'. The most widespread are the presence of monopoly elements, public goods and externalities.

Monopoly, in the broad sense of market failure, is any exercise of market power. It exists not so much in labour supply through trade unions as in the monopoly of capital. The vulnerability of the government on this issue is considerable. For not only is there a hypocritical carping about the effects of unions on wages, without a corresponding carping about the effect of firms on prices, but the government has merrily created, through privatisation, a number of private sector monopolies (gas, telecoms and soon airways). Nationalisation, after all, was and is one of a number of possible solutions to monopoly.

Public goods are when consumption is what economists call 'non-rival'. That means that if one person uses a particular good or service, it does not interfere with or lower the consumption by someone else. A classic example is broadcasting. My listening to the radio does not affect the quality or availability of the same radio station to you. The reason why markets are typically inefficient in producing these sorts of goods is that private firms find it hard to charge people for using them. Since consuming these goods does not affect anyone else, and hence is costless, they should in principle be free. Unsurprisingly, the market isn't much good at producing things for nothing. Much better for the state to provide not just the traditional public goods such as radio, TV, law and order, and defence, but also to support a host of other goods and services which contain public good elements (such as the arts, parks, environmental protection, regulation) at the local and national levels, and finance them through general taxation.

The third major failing of the market lies in the side effects of economic activity. Firms typically do not pay the full cost of the pollution they emit, the noise and smells they cause, and many of their numerous other impacts on the community. Thus government steps in to prevent acid rain by fitting extracting filters, farmers are restricted in their vandalism of their landscape, and airports and traffic are controlled for noise and disturbance. By freeing firms from controls, by privatisation and deregulation, these external effects simply get worse.

SO THE MARKET does not guarantee freedom, and it does not necessarily guarantee efficiency. This was clearly recognised in the immediate post-war reconstruction. The key areas of state intervention set out by Beveridge, Butler and the Attlee government were that the state would intervene pragmatically in industry (nationalisation), that the coordination failures of the economy meant an active macroeconomic policy (the commitment to full employment), and the guarantee of access to a decent standard of living through the Welfare State (social insurance, the Education Act, and the establishment of the National Health Service).

Nationalisation and full employment are about the instrumental efficiency of the market, and they are attempts to solve its failings. The Welfare State however does not derive its rationale from conventional economic theory. It is not about means, but rather about social justice. To reduce the question of the rationale of the Welfare State to one of means begs the fundamental value judgements. The policy must ultimately refer to the appropriate value judgements. These are what the debate on the distributive role of the state is about, and to discuss policy solely in terms of economic efficiency and market failure is at best misleading, and at worst damaging to the poor.

Since 1979, the Conservative government has launched a direct assault on these post-war pillars. The key policies — the Medium Term Financial Strategy, privatisation, reform of the labour market, the move toward private provision for pensions, health and education — represent an attempt to return to a laissez faire economy, with the state retreating to its 19th century nightwatchman role. The state is left with the residual role of the protection of property, law and order and defence. From the instrumental economic efficiency argument, upon which it rests, it is clearly mistaken. To that extent, to use Keynes' dictum, the Thatcherites are clearly 'the slaves of some defunct economist'.

Modern economics points in another direction. At the instrumental level, much more is now known about the ways in which markets fail. The behaviour of managers and firms is much more complex than early models allowed. Nationalisation is not a simple panacea, and the impacts of ownership, regulation and competition need to be much more carefully tailored to meet the desired social objectives. The environment cannot be protected by simple planning controls, and profits of agriculture and the needs of the environment will frequently conflict.

At the deeper level of value judgements, the 'new' welfare economics focuses on the positive freedom of individuals, and the need to provide people with the goods necessary to have the capabilities to participate in society. That does mean providing education, health, housing and social security. Privatisation, deregulation, and the rolling back of the borders of the state will not help the poor in Britain to gain a decent standard of living. The left in Britain should not abandon economic arguments to endless misuse by the Thatcherites, nor should it be content with the principles and practice of the post-war consensus. □

Dr Dieter Helm is a fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

Facing up to the coming trade crisis

KAREL WILLIAMS ***argues that a new form of selective import controls is necessary, and that 'protectionism' has to be made politically palatable***

THE BALANCE of payments went badly in 1986. The bad news in 1985 was the fall in the price of oil which reduced the payments surplus provided by oil exports. The bad news in the year just ended was that the deficit on manufactured trade is increasing again.

BALANCE OF TRADE IN MANUFACTURES

		£ million
	1980	+3,634
	1981	+2,905
	1982	+ 199
	1983	−4,849
	1984	−6,343
	1985	−5,774
(9 months)	1986	−6,435

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics

As the table shows, the trend towards increasing deficit on trade in manufactures has powerfully reasserted itself in the first nine months of 1986. The deficit on manufactured trade for the whole of last year is likely to be of the order of £9,000 million.

Before North Sea oil came on stream Britain had chronic payments problems. It was always likely that they would return 'when the oil runs out'. But that prospect was reassuringly remote when the official estimates showed oil production would only decline by 5 per cent per annum after 1985. The fundamentals are completely changed when the price of oil has fallen and if the manufacturing trade deficit carries on increasing. A rising surplus on services and overseas investments is nowhere near large enough to cover our growing deficit on manufactures.

The result will be a overall payments deficit which comes sooner rather than later. This point is now being taken on board in economic forecasts. November's Treasury statement showed that a £3.0 billion current account surplus in 1985 would be wiped out in 1986 and forecast a £1.5 billion deficit in 1987. As the current account deteriorates, foreigners become unwilling to hold pounds and a foreign exchange crisis then ensues. Interest rates have already been raised once to calm a nervous market.

It is ironic to see the Chancellor acting in this way. In an earlier debate about the run down of oil, he took the line that an old-fashioned payments and sterling crisis is impossible now fixed exchange rates have been abolished. The

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events of the next 18 months will prove him wrong because a fall in the real exchange rate will not automatically resolve our problem about payment deficit. No government can tolerate a sustained rapid depreciation of the pound which will stoke up domestic inflationary pressures as imports become more expensive, while moderate depreciation will not eliminate the trade deficit in manufactures which is at the heart of the problem.

A lower pound will not rebuild demolished factories or disbanded distribution networks. Nor will it make the remaining workforce work any harder or more effectively. Depreciation of the pound will only make our exports cheaper and/or make exporting more profitable. That is a help but not a great help when exports of British manufacturers are limited by their non-price characteristics.

The argument about the inadequacy of the adjustment mechanisms is corroborated by the evidence of the past three years when the pound has been depreciating. That has not undone the damage done by the trade trends of the past ten years. Manufactured export and import volumes have both grown by some 20 per cent since 1983. But the symmetry is deceptive. Export volumes have been recovering from a depressed level which was actually lower than 1977 while import volumes normally grow at around 20 per cent every three years. In the longer run the disparity of growth rates is frightening. Between 1975 and 1985 manufactured export volumes increased by just 34 per cent while import volumes increased by 116 per cent.

The impending trade crisis is likely to influence the timing and the result of the next election. The Tories are most likely to win if they call an election quickly in May or June after the Budget and before the balance of payments catches up with them. Labour's chances improve if the election is delayed till the autumn. More important, whoever wins the election will inherit a trade crisis in the making. Labour, like the other major parties, has not faced up to that uncongenial prospect and the question of how the trade crisis can be averted or contained.

LABOUR has distinctive economic policies but none of them will solve the trade crisis and some of them will make it worse. The worthy National Investment Bank scheme will bring back some investment funds. But, however they are applied, these funds will not transform our trade performance. A policy of moderate reflation will make things worse, even if the main emphasis is on renewal of infrastructure. What the government spends quickly becomes income for British consumers and a significant proportion of that income is then spent on imported manufactures.

> ***'None of Labour's policies will solve the trade crisis and some will make it worse.'***

If reflation aggravates a trade crisis, the orthodox 'solution' is as much deflation as necessary. That policy will damp down the demand for imports by increasing the numbers of the unemployed who have little discretionary purchasing power. A Labour government would naturally resist the imposition of such policies, especially in a national economy which now starts from a position of 14 per cent unemployment. But, if the pound is under constant pressure, the government's choice may be limited. The IMF and the bankers will insist on sound finance before they lend, just as they did in every post-war British sterling crisis.

The trajectory of purposive reflation followed by reluctant deflation is a familiar one. It was last seen in the socialist experiment in France under Mitterrand in the early 1980s. If Labour wins the next election, Neil Kinnock is likely to go into the history books as the man who presided over another failed centre-left experiment. And, if the dole queues lengthen, that failure has real social costs. For this reason, Labour should now address the manufacturing trade deficit which causes the trade crisis.

Over 40 years, successive British governments have constantly exhorted British manufacturing firms to export and have intermittently provided a favourable macro-climate. But these firms have never delivered the (export) goods in sufficient volume to compensate for the British consumer's developing taste for manufactured imports. British firms cannot be compelled to export. We are not living in a East European economy where the state can direct the necessary quantum of manufactured output into exports.

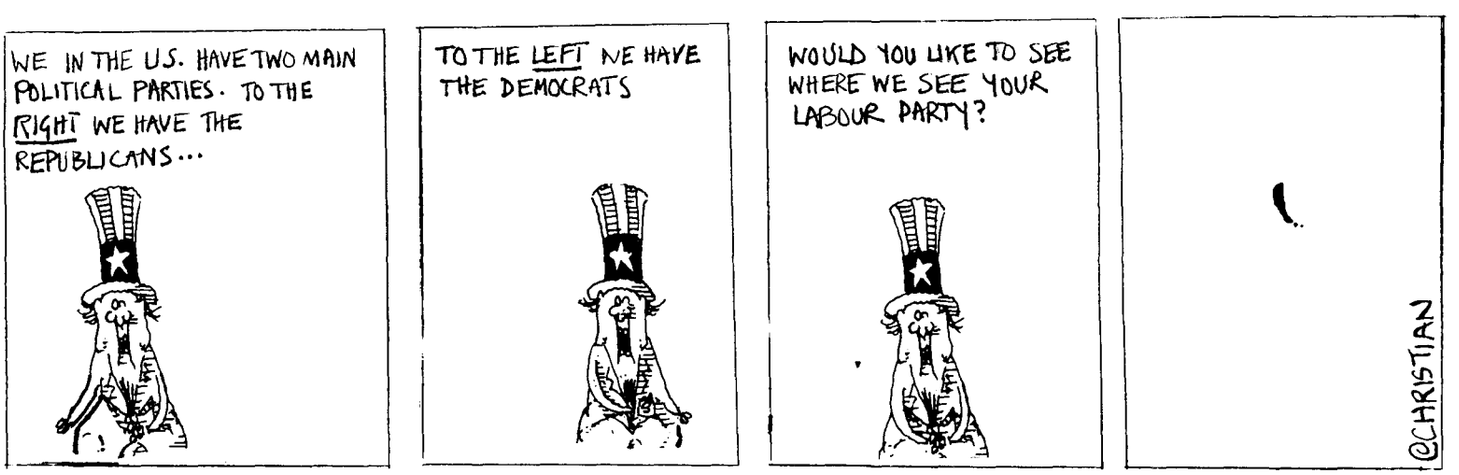
Logically, therefore, the trade crisis can only be prevented or alleviated by curbing manufactured imports. Because protection is politically embarrassing and intellectually unpalatable, this cannot yet be said plainly and directly by any mainstream politician. But, if Labour politicians want to win the next election and achieve something when they are in office, they should be thinking about import controls. Controversial policy commitments could lose the next election, but free trade will sink the next Labour administration.

The question is not whether we should restrict manufactured imports but how could we do it? The moderately encouraging answer is that a narrowly focused policy of selective import controls would be sufficient to control the trade crisis. Fundamentally, the maufacturing trade deficit is a two commodity, two country problem. Three quarters or more of the total trade deficit is in motor vehicles and electronics. And most of these goods come from Germany and Japan.

Selective controls need not take the form of tariffs and quotas. The new technique of value added content regulation offers tax and other incentives to those firms (British and foreign) which manufacture products with a high percentage of British content. This generates income and employment at home. It makes much more sense than our current practice of encouraging foreign manufacturers to set up mere assembly plants here. This has helped to create a situation where semi-manufacturers (components and such like) now account for one-third of British manufactured imports. Generally, value added controls would not featherbed inefficiency, but provide an incentive for British and foreign firms to create and use efficient manufacturing capacity in Britain.

The immediate response will be that this is politically impossible because discrimination against German imports would break EEC rules. So it would. But, if import controls are economically necessary and technically feasible, a Labour administration should work to make them politically possible. □

The argument of this article is developed at greater length in a recently published book: Keynes, Beveridge and Beyond *by T. Cutler, K. Williams and J. Williams; Routledge; £7.95. Karel Williams is a lecturer in economics at the University of Wales.*


WE IN THE U.S. HAVE TWO MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES. TO THE RIGHT WE HAVE THE REPUBLICANS...
TO THE LEFT WE HAVE THE DEMOCRATS
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHERE WE SEE YOUR LABOUR PARTY?
(
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The moral imperative remains

European socialism is being fashionably written off. Labour MP

GILES RADICE ***begs to differ***

CLEARLY, the period of the recession has been a difficult one for European socialists. Their ideas and policies have been under challenge. Traditionally, socialists have given a high priority to full employment and social spending. Yet since 1973, after twenty years of uninterrupted economic expansion, social advance and full employment, there has been a prolonged period of recession. Unemployment in Western Europe is more than treble the rate in 1973. The welfare state has not only been fiercly attacked by Conservatives but has proved considerably more difficult to finance.

Politically, there have been substantial setbacks. In Britain, Labour has lost the last two elections, in 1983 with its lowest share of the poll since 1918. In West Germany, the Social Democrats fell from power in 1982, lost the subsequent election and seem unable to recapture the political initiative. In France, the Socialist government was blown off course when its relatively modest expansion programme was brought to an abrupt halt in 1983 by international pressure, and, in 1986, it was voted out of office. One leading political journalist has even claimed: 'The problem is everywhere the same; there exists no longer either the class base or the moral imperative for a socialist society. The idea that has gripped the European mind for more than a century has run its course'.

But an accurate answer to the question as to how far democratic socialism is a 'fair weather' approach which is doomed to decline and failure when hard times come has to be based on the examination of the evidence. In *Socialists in the Recession** we have analysed the political fortunes, policies and records since 1973 of six major European Socialist parties (the SPD, the French Socialists, the British Labour Party, the Spanish Socialists, the Swedish Social Democrats and the Austrian Socialists) and have come to the following conclusions.

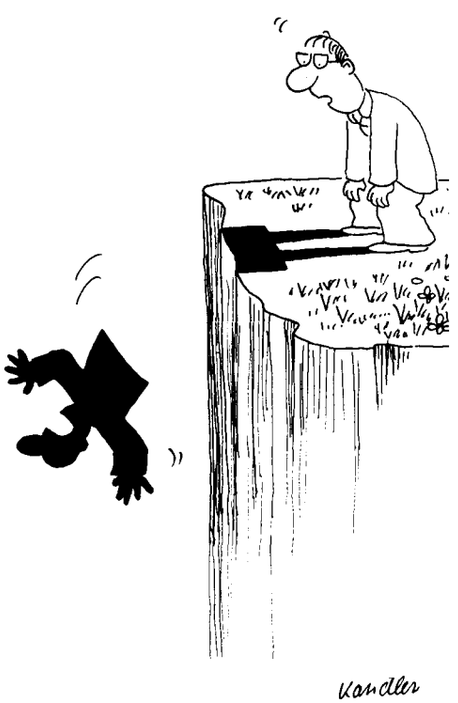
The achievements of socialist governments during the recession have been, in many ways, impressive, particularly when compared with governments of the Right. Their record on unemployment is superior to that of most other administrations. Socialist Austria and Social Democratic Sweden have consistently maintained the lowest levels of unemployment in the OECD area. Even when, as in the case of Britain in the 1970s and France in the 1980s, socialist administrations have got into difficulties, they still managed to prevent unemployment increasing as fast as in a number of other countries.

What is especially significant was that, in most cases, these administrations have managed to combine better than average records on both unemployment and inflation. Austria, throughout the recession period, and West Germany, under Helmut Schmidt, performed especially well. Mitterrand's France managed to bring down the rate of inflation from 13.5 per cent in 1981 to under 5 per cent by the end of 1985 without paying the cost in unemployment suffered in Mrs Thatcher's Britain.

Socialists have also continued to give a much higher priority to welfare. The record in Sweden, West Germany and Austria was particularly noteworthy, while even when, as in France and Britain, socialist governments were forced to cut public spending, the weakest groups were given special protection.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE socialist governments have been those which, as in West Germany, Austria and Sweden, have had the most fully developed 'solidarity' systems. It was these administrations which most successfully combined low levels of unemployment and inflation with a high level of social spending and welfare. If the benefits were clear, it was equally obvious that when, as in France or Spain, such agreements (with unions, employers and other groups) were less developed or broke down, as in Britain, it was far more difficult to achieve such multiple objectives.

With the growing interdependence of modern industrial economies, socialist administrations have understood better than other governments the compelling case for coordination. At the 1978 Bonn summit, James Callaghan and Helmut Schmidt, supported by a sympathetic American President, persuaded the seven largest industrial countries to put together a reflationary package which had a significant impact on world output. The failure of President Mitterrand to commit more conservative leaders to take similar action was one of the main reasons why the recession of the 1980s was deeper and more prolonged than that of the 1970s.



The socialist alternative model has not only been more successful, but it has also been distinct from that of other governments. Interventionist economic policies which sought to combine low unemployment, low inflation and high output; social policies which gave priority to welfare, community services and consensus building; and foreign policies which worked for international economic coordination and for peace; these have all continued to be common to the socialist approach.

If there has been a modification, it has occurred in economic policy. In the harsher economic political and economic climate of the 1980s, it has become more difficult, as both the French and Spanish socialists in their different ways found out, to pursue expansionist policies independently.

The Swedish 'third way' based on a big devaluation, was a conscious attempt to replace the boost of a big increase in internal demand by the stimulus provided by a change in the exchange rate. Even so, the examples of the Austrian socialists, and even of the French socialists in the later 'austerity' period, have demonstrated that there is still a place, in spite of a hostile international environment, for policies which gave priority to employment.

The political idea which has best characterised the socialist approach during the recession it is that of solidarity. In contrast with the unbalanced and divisive individualism of the New Right, socialists have stressed the need to develop the maximum possible social consensus. The case for welfare has been advocated not solely as a means of protecting the less well off and providing essential services (such as health and education) but also increasingly because it would help maintain social cohesion. If the socialism of the 1950s and 1960s was about social justice and sharing out the fruits of growth, in the 1970s and '80s socialism has been more about solidarity and common purpose and obligation.

FINALLY, the argument that there is no longer the base or moral imperative for the survival of socialism has been confounded by the continued successes of European socialists. Of course, there has been a tendency (as a result of economic and social change) for the proportion of the manual workers to decline. Yet, despite this development, during the 1980s socialists continued to be the majority party in Austria and Sweden, gained power for the first time since the war in France and Spain, and staged considerable recoveries in Britain and West Germany.

What is clear is that socialist leaders like Palme, Kreisky, Schmidt, Mitterrand, Gonzalez and now Kinnock, have been able to appeal successfully beyond the ranks of their traditional support on the basis of their parties' values, policies and overall credibility and competence. European democratic socialism has remained a powerful political force because it has proved as relevant in the hard times as in the good times. □

*Socialists in the Recession, *by Giles and Lisanne Radice. Giles Radice is Labour's education spokesman.*

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HATE FIGURES (1)

Honoured by their own

Politicians who inspire fear and loathing abroad are often worshipped at home. We present portraits of two such figures — sure to play large roles in the year ahead — placed within their own societies. First: 'Ulster Autocrat', the patronage politics of the Reverend Ian Paisley by

PETER BROOKE

NORTHERN IRELAND is a region of the UK that has been excluded from the politics of the UK. The people living there have never, since Northern Ireland was established, had the chance to join or vote for or against the political parties that formed their government at Westminster. Consequently, politics in Northern Ireland has not been based on policy for government. It has been a matter of patronage. Under the Stormont Parliament, all the patronage was in the hands of Protestant Unionists. Since the late sixties, it has been a matter of competition between Protestants and Catholics, Unionists and Nationalists.

An understanding of this state of affairs is essential to understanding the career of Ian Paisley, and especially his success in the 1970s. It is essential too, for an understanding of the answer to the question posed in a recent book on Paisley*: 'Why would tens of thousands of such people ('solid, decent, respectable Protestants') — even hundreds of thousands in European elections — turn out to support the man who has come to personify Northern Ireland's unenviable reputation as the most impregnable bastion of religious bigotry and bloodletting in the Western world?'

The answer is very simple. Protestants and Catholics are in competition for patronage from a Westminster government which has no electoral stake in the province. Reasoned argument may secure a few favours here or there, but intimidation is also a valuable weapon. Westminster's only interest in Northern Ireland is that it should cease to be bothersome. Consequently, whichever side causes the most bother is likely to win concessions. On the Nationalist side there is a determined and disciplined army with a moral authority residing in a sixty six-year old tradition quite independent of either the electorate or the elected MPs. The division between Sinn Fein and the 'constitutional' wing of Nationalism, the SDLP, is complete and the SDLP is undoubtedly quite sincere in its abhorrence of the IRA. Yet the IRA provide a potent argument as to why concessions should be given to the SDLP.

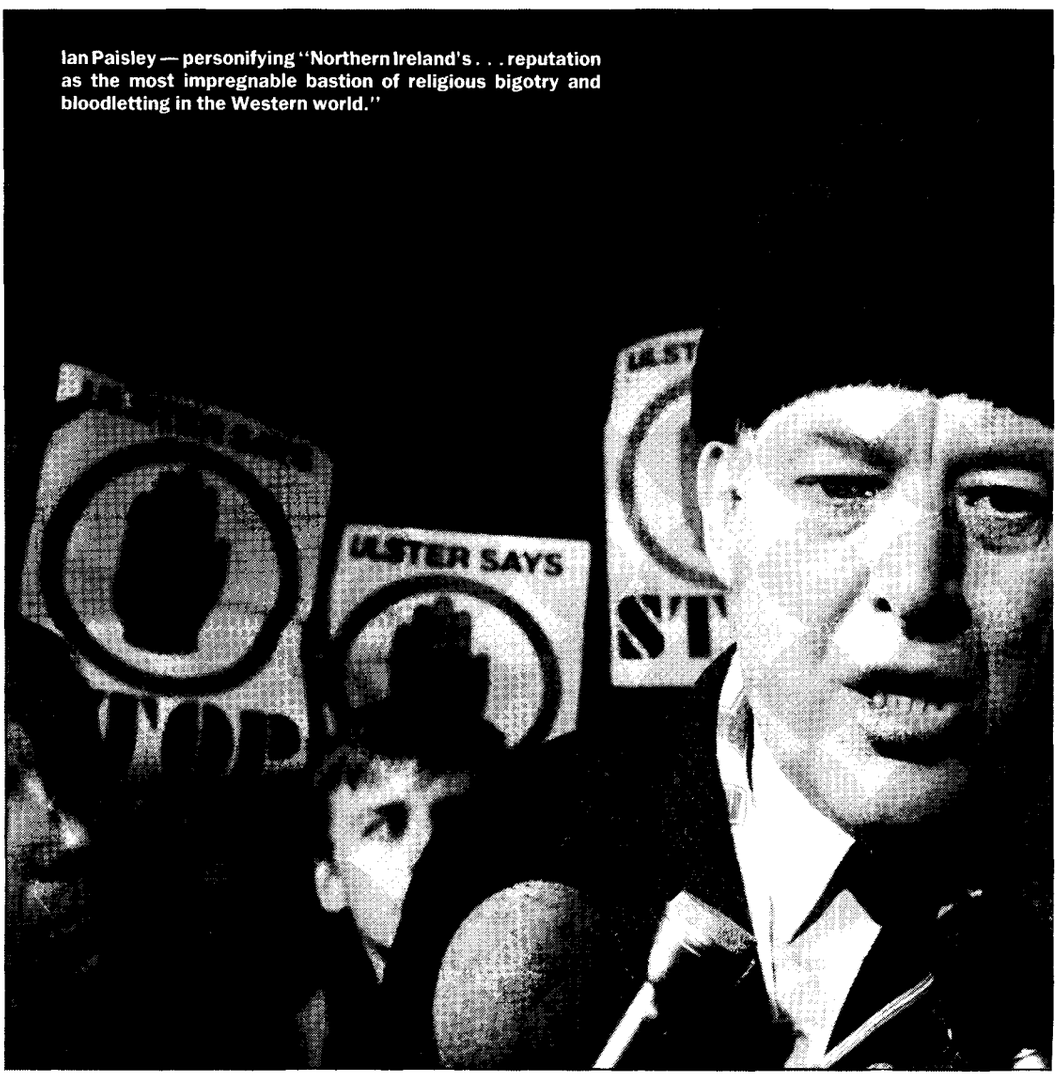
The Loyalist paramilitary tradition, however, is much less secure and it has an embarrassing habit of looking to elected politicians for 'leadership'. Much of the evidence for Paisley's involvement with paramilitary activities comes from disgruntled paramilitaries who felt that they needed his encouragement to engage in violence. They lack the moral independence of the Republican tradition.

Paisley's popularity derives from the feeling that he is the Unionist leader best able to worry Westminster, or at least persuade Westminster that the Unionist side can be more bothersome than the Nationalist side. He himself went some way towards explaining the situation when he said recently, in the aftermath of the first public display of the latest Loyalist army — Ulster Resistance — that, in a democracy, the ballot box prevails; under anarchy, whoever can control the streets prevails. Northern Ireland is excluded from the democracy of the British state of which it is a part; it has been in a state of implicit anarchy since 1920, only kept in check by the power of the Unionists on the streets. Once that power was broken, as it was in the late sixties, the anarchy became explicit.

UNDER THESE circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Northern Ireland developed oddly. Having been deprived of the politics of the state, confined in a little pseudo state, the confrontation between Protestant Unionist and Catholic Nationalist which dominated its inception, remained fixed and frozen.

The province developed by imitating developments in Great Britain, but did not share in the battles over government policy that created this development. In particular, religious divisions were not subsumed into the great political confrontation of right and left which came to dominate British politics, though to a large extent religious differences among Protestants were taken out of politics. Catholics in Northern Ireland looked toward the Republic, which was engaged in the great adventure of constructing a monolithically Catholic state.

Protestant Ulster became a model of what Great Britain might have been politically had the Labour Party not developed, and this undoubtedly constitutes a large part of its charm for the Tory Integrationists — Ian Gow, who resigned as housing minister over the Anglo-Irish Agreement; Sir John Biggs-Davison, long-time unionist war-horse; and T E Utley, assistant editor on the *Daily*



Ian Paisley — personifying "Northern Ireland's . . . reputation as the most impregnable bastion of religious bigotry and bloodletting in the Western world."

Camera Press

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Telegraph. Thus, for example, they argue that Paisley, in his autocracy and intolerance, is a mirror image of the Catholicism he abhors. But if Paisley is as bad as the Roman Catholic Church, are they not implying that the Roman Catholic Church is as bad as Paisley? In which case, what kind of attitude can they have to the Republic of Ireland?

Whereas Paisley is merely the head of a small, self supporting Church, the Roman Catholic Church is the dominant institution in the Republic of Ireland, arguably more powerful than the parliament. Where the Free Presbyterians control four schools paid for out of their own pockets, the Roman Catholic Church controls nearly all the schools in the Republic and a large proportion of schools in Northern Ireland and is supported in so doing by the state. It also very largely controls hospital services in the Republic. Paisley does not exercise a fraction of the power of his mirror image.

A framework of this kind is essential for an understanding of Ian Paisley. He can only be judged as 'malign' — the word used of him by Pollak and Moloney in their biography — on the basis of certain alternative values, and they do not tell us by what values he is being judged. The best way to evaluate Paisley is on his face value, since it is on his face value that his success is based. Pollak and Maloney specialise in 'inside stories': a further work on Paisley wisely decided that that is not the prism through which to understand the man**. Steve Bruce's anxiety to comprehend Paisley sometimes makes him read like an apologist for him: as one interviewer put it on Radio Ulster's religious programme, *Sunday Sequence* (in a quite indignant tone): 'You seem to like him'.

And indeed he does. But Bruce is a sociologist, specialising in religion, and his liking for Paisley resembles the liking a naturalist might have for a rare and exotic plant, regardless of whether or not he finds it beautiful. Most of the book is an intelligent and at times brilliant attempt to understand a particular religious outlook. But he falls down in his last chapter when he tries to extend his understanding of Paisley's 'Free Presbyterians' to an understanding of Northern Ireland as a whole and the 'Protestant identity' in particular.

His conclusion that evangelical protestantism provides the only convincing rationale against a united Ireland is bizarre, though it is partially explained by an earlier failure (when discussing 'secular' reasons for Unionism) to explain the benefits of the welfare state. Equally bizarre is his view that Catholic Ireland has achieved nationhood by transcending its religious identity. He supports this by pointing out that the Provisional IRA have a continuing quarrel with the Catholic hierarchy, but this quarrel is purely concerned with politics and not at all with religion. Sinn Fein is not pressing for a secular education system and they have rescinded the resolution of their 1985 conference which could have been interpreted as a call for abortion on demand.

ALTHOUGH he provides sociological definitions for terms such as 'sect' 'denomination' and 'ethinic community', he fails at a crucial point to provide one for 'nation'. Thus, it is not clear what he means when he says that the Ulster Protestants are not a 'nation' but an 'ethnic community.' It becomes even less clear when he gives, as part of his evidence for saying that they are not a nation, the fact that some of them are toying with the idea of independence!

The largest criticism that can fairly be made of Ian Paisley is that he has little conception of what the British society he supposedly wishes to be a part of is. He thrives on the abnormality of Northern Ireland — the constant struggle between Protestant and Catholic to wring concessions out of Westminster.

Having little conception — or at least an outdated conception — of what British society is, Paisley has little idea of how to break into it. His thinking is confined to the unreal world of politics divorced from executive power at the highest level. He does not have a clear idea of what he wants. His erratic behaviour is a function of the fact that politics in Northern Ireland are largely confined to reaction to decisions that are made at the level of the sovereign government, beyond the reach of the Northern Ireland electorate.

Sinn Fein and the SDLP have a sense of direction through their desire to break out of the cage and join the Republic of Ireland; Jim Molyneaux and Enoch Powell, Paisley's Official Unionist rivals, have some limited sense of the need to establish closer links with the rest of the UK, though they lack the courage to melt their politics into the politics of the UK.

Paisley, however, seems to be content with the politics of patronage and merely discontent with the amount of patronage he gets. □

*Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak *Paisley*, Poolberg Press, £5.95. **Steve Bruce *God Save Ulster!* Clarendon Press, £15.

HATE FIGURES (2)

Hydrocarbon prince

***The untrammelled power of Colonel Muammar Gadafy, by* JOHN DAVIS**

LIBYA is a tyranny in which citizens are not sure of their rights, not sure they can secure them, cannot control their army or their budget; in which the ruler does not consult them unless it suits him, and from which he pursues dissidents across frontiers to visit them with violent death.

But Libyans (many accepting the truth of this Western account, accepting at least in part the Western evaluation of their regime) do not see it *only* so: in addition to suffering from own government, they also struggle for political, spiritual and cultural freedoms. From this viewpoint it is wrong to think of Libya as a society both arbitrary and totally constrained, as one in which terror secures obedience to a ruler with a whim of steel. Quite apart from inefficiency, from government's inability to exploit fully the technical means of oppression it has to hand, *Libyans, including Muammar Gadafy, see themselves as striving for freedom.*

Most Libyans want freedom from foreign control for themselves and for other Arabs, and they respond to Gadafy's foreign policies. Probably without exception, they want freedom from hunger, sickness, ignorance, and welcome the amenity and welfare which the régime has produced. Most Libyans agree in principle with Gadafy that no Libyan should be able to oppress another. They disagree with his detailed implementation: trade is not oppressive, they say; and many think that it is not sensible to impose quantitative limits on private wealth.

But the years of the oil boom, when per capita incomes increased from about $30 to about $5,000, (between 1957 and 1960) were offensive to people who were excluded from the richest pickings: Libya was then Wild East frontier country, and religious, social and self-control on getting wealth and on spending it seemed to have gone. So Libyans *do* think they should eliminate luxuriousness and oppression; but they also tend to think that it is generally other people who are oppressive, and that their own activities do not need state control.

Those aims and values are largely understood, and Libyan arguments about them are familiar enough to Westerners. But Gadafy also has another aim, 'to abolish the state': and this is less intelligible to citizens of long-established states. Gadafy thinks people should be free from states because states always involve representation; and representation always requires people to give up part of their god-given natural sovereignty. It cannot be *just* that such a gift should be passed on to a politician. So, Gadafy proposes to demolish the state and to create a series of popular institutions to run local affairs and to send delegates to a national popular assembly.

Below that are district and sub-district assemblies, elected by all adults over 18 — though in practice, few if any women vote. *Above* the national assembly is the national popular congress: like the assembly, it is elected from the district delegates every three years. These bodies govern the state institutions at national, district and local levels.

In effect, Gadafy proposes perpetual mobilisation, military and political, of the entire population: everyone shall be responsible for defence and for political decisions; no-one shall have to surrender sovereignty. It does not work quite like that: the problem of representation is transposed to the local administrations, where people surrender sovereignty to local representatives; and the petroleum industry and the armed forces and police are excluded from control by popular committee and the national assembly. So Gadafy and his coterie control finance and force, and in fact manage the agenda of the local assemblies: they behave in state-like ways, though of course they are not subject to popular control.

GADAFY'S rhetoric that he will dismantle the state, and his extensive devolution of day-to-day

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control, is successful because he casts it in terms which evoke harmonies in the hearts of many Libyans. He shares with European conservatives the illusion that when the state is taken off the people's backs what will remain will be families (rather than, say, international companies or mafias); but he — and Libyans — know that families are linked together in tribe, tribes into nation, nations into the world. What he proposes is a system of descent, traced in the male line only, which can ultimately link all humans (because it goes back to Adam), but in the meantime unites Libyans, and soon, he hopes, will link all Arabs.

The image is resonant for Libyans because most *do* organise part of their lives on principles of descent, and because their grandfathers and great-grandfathers have told them that in the past they organised all their political and social lives in that way: political loyalty and social obligations came with birth, were natural and not rational. There was no police, no judges, no treasury, no army. A man under threat could call on his brothers, and if they were not a sufficient deterrent, on his father's brothers and their children. A man on hard times could similarly call on his kinsmen (traced in the male line) for material relief. The more patrilineal ancestors you share with a man, the stronger your claim on his loyalty, and his on yours. The image is of a political system in which every man stood for himself, and for his women and slaves, and met all threats with instant reprisal. No man took orders from another, all met their natural obligations. All men were armed; no man (they say) surrendered his autonomy.

Again, it was not quite like that. But the fit between Gadafy's vision of the stateless nation and many Libyans' image of a governmentless past is sufficiently close to have two consequences. On the one hand it is a source of legitimacy: the one resonates with the other. True, Libyan bank managers, petroleum executives, hospital administrators raise their eyebrows in only slightly amused scepticism (how can you manage a modern organisation without giving or accepting orders?); but the rhetoric of 'representation is fraud' strikes harmonies in the hearts of men whose grandfathers (source of today's men, and of their loyalties) fought from 1911 to 1932 against the Christian state of the Italian colonial government.

Secondly, when Libyans do object to the state-like activities of their leader, they are effectively disabled: the loyalties of descent are general, not specific. By definition they are not based on agreement about policy or ideology, and it is difficult to mobilise people for a rational cause. As Roy Behnke has put it in *Herders of Cyrenaica*, genealogy is 'high on structure and low on content', and does not prescribe attachment to ideas, but to people. Such an organisation cannot match the hierarchy and specialisation of an army or police force.

Gadafy's abolition of representation is related to three features of his régime. First, he cuts a traditional North African political figure: he can assume the role of a wild man from the desert, descending on corrupt townsmen and instituting a puritanical and egalitarian social order. That is a known role, described for instance by Ibn Khaldun in the fourteenth century. Purifiers from the desert overthrow luxurious hierarchies (in which all but one man take orders from others)

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Gadafy: he can assume the role of a wild man from the desert descending on corrupt townsmen

and establish their own dynasty. Gadafy assumes that mantle from time to time, with some success.

Secondly, Gadafy's revolution was unexpected; the coup surprised everyone, and the ideas which eventually re-shaped Libyan society grew more or less in a vacuum: cadres were not trained in any international school for revolutionaries; and there was no attempt to publish a persuasive programme. Moreover, the men who got the job of implementing the new social order had not gone through any period of repression during the previous régime: no Long March, no exile had shaped their attitudes to their fellow citizens; nor had they the credentials of suffering shared with their leader, which would entitle them to criticise or advise.

So Gadafy and the Revolutionary Command Council were untrammelled by any promises they had made; they were deliverers, but had not promised any specific goods. And they had no international obligation, were not bound to any of the international cultures of revolution on offer. Gadafy and his men came to power freer than most revolutionaries.

THE THIRD FEATURE is that Libya is a Hydrocarbon Society. Economics based on petroleum are fairly well understood: they are dependent on foreign markets for their wealth, their consumption and for their manual labour. Natives of hydrocarbon society become managers and *comprador* intermediaries; national wealth is distributed as salaries to administrators, as welfare to citizens. Hydrocarbon politics are less explored, but the central point is that petroleum companies, as Lord Strathalmond, chairman of BP from 1941 to 1956, has remarked, become the tax-collectors for the Hydrocarbon Prince. Moreover, they collect tax from foreigners, and not from the citizens of Libya (or Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Oman, Qatar — all of whom also get more than 90 per cent of their state revenues from petroleum exports).

An *Industrial* Prince has to finance his or her dedication to public service from the pockets of the citizens he rules; and he requires an elaborate state apparatus to extract the wherewithal, as well as some consensus among citizens that taxes should be paid at all. The Industrial Prince sometimes has to concede a form of representative institution, and is constrained to allow representatives at least some apparent control over expenditure. But a *Hydrocarbon* Prince gets his money from foreigners, and can get by with no greater apparatus than is needed to measure the flow of oil and to repress any other citizens who conceive a vocation to public service. His expenditure is not subjected to public scrutiny; he can make as little distinction between Treasury and Privy Purse as he chooses, and can do very nicely without representative institutions.

When Gadafy came to power he found a constitutional monarchy under King Idris (corrupt, weakly formed, feebly based) established in 1952 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. But he was able to exploit his freedom from the constraints which hedge Industrial Princes by 'abolishing the state': 'no taxation without representation' really only binds a Prince when he has to tax someone. In Hydrocarbon Society the principle is: 'no taxation, *so* no representation'.

In Libya, with a strong tradition of rejection of the state and of barely imaginable suffering inflicted by states, the abolition of representation finds a ready echo; and Gadafy is free to behave in a Princely manner because his cadres were not hardened in pre-revolutionary adversity and have no credentials to safeguard the unpublished revolutionary programme. Of course, the political economy is unstable because Libya is vulnerable to fluctuations on the international oil markets; and Libyan petroleum will eventually dry up. The régime is also threatened by the apparatus itself. But in the meantime Gadafy is able to link Libyan nostalgia for the governmentless past with the freedom he gets from not taxing his subjects; and he can use some part of his revenues to achieve the freedom from want and ignorance which all Libyans desire.

Gadafy's régime is decidedly unattractive; but it is wrong to dismiss it as merely the product of an evil soul or a diseased brain. For it does respond in some measure to the nostalgia of Libyans, and to their real memories of suffering from states. And it is a product of Gadafy's structural freedom: he is a revolutionary untrammelled by national or international obligation, and a Prince who does not need to live out of his citizens' pockets. It is sensible to look at the real constraints on Princes of any kind, before making moral or psychiatric discriminations among them.

John Davis is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Kent. His book, Libyan Politics: Tribe and Revolution *will be published next spring by I. B. Tauris.*

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ESSAY

Back to the nursery

Feminist writing on motherhood has been undergoing a curious shift — and, argues* LYNNE SEGAL, *one replete with danger

'FOR MANY YOUNG WOMEN in the late 1960s and the early 1970s the women's liberation movement meant liberation from motherhood': so begins the entry under 'Motherhood' in the *Encyclopedia of Feminism*, recently published in Britain. Clearly and succinctly it sums up the Eighties perception of feminism a decade earlier — a truism now as acceptable, it seems, to feminists as to anti-feminists.

For me, a mother from 1969, and for some of my feminist friends who chose to mother in those years, the entry under 'Motherhood' would express a different sentiment, one which will probably never achieve encyclopaedical status: 'Women's liberation meant the freedom to enjoy motherhood for the very first time.' It was in our early feminist movement, and not before, that I began to value and gain confirmation from my identity as a mother; it was there, and not elsewhere, that I received assistance in and gained pleasure from mothering; it was then that the issue of childcare became a central item at every women's conference or meeting I ever attended. However often we hear it denied, and however strongly some feminists now disagree, children and childcare were of great importance to many feminists in the early Seventies:'The liberation of women,' Valerie Charlton wrote in 1973, 'is inseparable from, among other things, the development of different ways of caring for and relating to children.'

I could, with a sophisticated postmodernism, simply marvel at the instability and deceptive nature of 'truth'. But there is a more important shift to explore in the lives and experiences of women as mothers — and feminists as mothers — over the last two decades.

It is now commonplace to hear and read that the first phase of the contemporary women's movement was too 'phallocentric': too accepting and uncritical of typically 'masculine' behaviour and values, too rejecting and critical of typically 'feminine' pursuits, style and behaviour (the criticism is much the same whether it appears in the more esoteric, idealist poetics of Julia Kristeva and French feminist theory, or in the more mundane pronouncements of British and American feminists). There is truth in some of this subsequent re-thinking. The predominantly young women who had often benefited from a middle-class education and become feminists in the early Seventies mostly wanted more than the domestic horizons of our mothers' lives (though we equally wanted something very different from the lives of our fathers). Feminists had early on stressed the isolation, conflict and economic dependence most women faced as full-time mothers, or else the weary exhaustion of working mothers. But then these were the complaints feminist researchers like Lee Comer and Ann Oakley were hearing from mothers on almost every doorstep — we certainly did not invent them. And so feminists then pursued a variety of strategies for better childcare provision and for men's involvement in childcare. We also insisted that no woman should be forced to bear children when accidentally pregnant, or unable to give them the love and care they would need.

Motherhood and childcare were always a part of feminist thought and action, but there has been a noticeable shift in feminist writing on motherhood since the late Seventies. Influential US writers like Dorothy Dinnerstein, Adrienne Rich and Nancy Chodorow began to explore mothering in different ways, attempting to grapple anew with the full psychological complexity of women's desire to mother, and the full political significance of the institution of mothering. This shift reflected and reinforced a more general one which had been developing within the women's movement. For, while there had always been feminists who were mothers, and had chosen to be, an increasing number of women's liberationists were in their thirties rather than their twenties by the latter half of the Seventies and, therefore, facing a new urgency over the choice of motherhood. The defence of women's rights to abortion and activity in the National Abortion Campaign was now more often accompanied by feminists reflecting on their 'mixed feelings' about pregnancy and abortion.

> ***'However strongly some feminists now disagree, children and childcare were of great importance to many feminists in the early Seventies'***

Many feminists were beginning to reassess motherhood and to observe infancy in new ways. This gained cultural expression in feminist art-works like the Lacanian-inspired *Post-Partum Document* of Mary Kelly, exhibited widely in the late Seventies. She documented the experience of childbirth and childcare, focusing on the development of the child's consciousness and the effects of the mother-child relationship on the mother's sense of her own femininity. In Mary Kelly's words, 'It is not only the infant whose future personality is formed at this crucial moment, but also the mother whose "feminine" psychology is sealed by the sexual division of labour in childcare.' Feminists began not just to question men's absence from childcare, but to ask why it often proved so difficult for men to nurture others adequately.

The new feminist literature on mothering, however, while exploring and giving value to a relationship so central in the lives of most women, is also contentious. In Chodorow's influential writing, for example, 'feminine identity' and the desire to mother flow in an unproblematic and inevitable way from early and continuing mutual identifications between mother and daughter. As in the popular writing of Eichenbaum and Orbach in this country, the generalisations about women and men's individual psychology merely mirror conventional generalisations about social roles and expectations. The North American feminist Sara Ruddick similarly suggests that women learn from their mothers 'the activity of preservative love and the maternal thinking that arises from it', making women more peaceful and closer to the concrete issues of daily life than are men.

The internal psychic ambivalence, aggression, rejection or irrational possessive intensity which may accompany or confound the pleasures of women's mothering, and complicate her relations with daughters and sons, are smoothed away in this literature. So too is the reality and significance of the competing social pressures which conflict with the demands of children and affect how we are able to relate to and care for them — whether arising from the exhaustion of continuing jobs and domestic duties, from career ambitions or the desire for creative and personal fulfilment. Still bearing a striking similarity to the Fifties sex-role sociology of Talcott Parsons, where in 'normal' or 'standard' family groupings women acquire expressive and nurturing psychologies in contrast with men's instrumentality and autonomy, this feminist writing assures a static picture of relations between women and men. It also reinforces ideas of fundamental and stable differences between women and men: ideas central to all existing ideologies of male dominance and which women's liberation in its early days rejected.

The new interest in motherhood has also suggested a new and problematic theory of the real roots of women's oppression, located here in the mother-daughter relationship. Women are seen as having richer, more caring, less compulsive and narrow psychologies than men, but psychologies which inevitably subordinate them because of their life-long identification with the primary caregiver — the mother — whose life is devoted to the service of others. Men, in contrast, develop a compulsive need to assert a masculinity which expresses power over women, because of the inevitable rupture in their own early identification with the mother and a life-long need to distance themselves from her nurturing expressiveness. But this exacerbates what was from the beginning a partial blind spot of feminist thought, looking only at the dynamics of family life for the origin of men's general power over women. As Cynthia Cockburn explains so well in her books *Brothers* and *Machinery of Dominance* (Pluto) sexual hierarchies are also created and maintained in the

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Icon of holy motherhood: 'The Virgin of Vladimir' c.1125

workplace, casting their shadow over women's and men's lives in the home. The institutional and cultural sites of men's power are varied and complex, and most certainly not reducible to any fixed psychologies of women or men.

The recent feminist writing on mothering is popular, of course, partly because despite obvious exceptions and qualifications, women do display a greater sensitivity and solicitude towards others than men do. One possible explanation of this is certainly girls' closeness to and identification with their mothers, but there are many others, all converging towards the same end and all contingent upon women's secondary place in society generally and the more limited options open to women. And by far the most important factor in determining what is seen as women's distinctive sensibilities would seem to me to be the *work* of mothering itself, rather than any shared psychology of women.

Mothering is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by mothering, to paraphrase Marx and Engels. Young children's characteristic joy and delight in the world, their laughter and rage, the great love they offer the person or persons who 'mother' them, their vulnerability and dependence, the great demands they make on us could hardly fail to affect our consciousness and conduct dramatically. But not all mothers will have the time, inclination and capacity to respond to the desires and fears of children in ways which enable the children to flourish as happy, creative, confident and caring human beings. Many women do not display the characteristics of 'maternal thinking' until they begin to mother. And, even then, they may not.

Reasons why

What seems important to me at this time is *why* so many feminists feel the need to re-write the history of the present women's movement, as though feminists had only in recent years rediscovered motherhood. It is obviously a good thing that more feminists today, while still fighting the coercive ideology of motherhood (women are mothers or they are nothing of value) and criticising the social institution of mothering (the isolation of mothers and young children), feel a less equivocal confidence and joy in choosing to mother: in pregnancy, in childbirth and in childcare. And it is in particular the eloquent poetry and prose of feminists like Adrienne Rich and others writing on motherhood which have captured and spread feminists' determination to celebrate this aspect of the lives of women.

But we do not need to deny the pleasures of motherhood in order to suggest that there is a danger of traditional sexist stereotypes of women and men being reaffirmed in this literature. The lasting strength of the mothering literature is the powerful assertion of the contrast between the overwhelming importance of women's commitment to mothering and other types of caring, compared with the general social undervaluing of such commitment. But the paradox of how to affirm the real value of women's mothering, while seeing how it also serves to perpetuate women's oppression, can also lead to a decreasing emphasis on the public responsibility for the adequate care of all dependent people.

In my view, the new focus on mothering, the maternal revival in feminism, has come partly from feminists' disappointment that our aspirations to engage in creative and rewarding work, to struggle for social change, to build warm and supportive communal spaces and friendship networks — as well as to choose to have children — have proved so often difficult, stressful or transitory. Decent work, committed politics and real community are not easy to find or sustain in the public world of a market economy, least of all in times of civil repression and global recession. It is these difficulties which make the supposedly 'private' world of family life a more optimistic terrain for feminist theorising (especially for middle-class feminists with the time and financial backing to create reasonable conditions for their own mothering). And this is one important reason for the popularity of Rich and Chodorow's work, together with Ruddick's notion of 'maternal thinking', in Western feminism — at least within white Western feminism.

This perspective is popular also because it has enabled a return to the cosy certainties of common

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sense — men may have power, but women, like the powerless everywhere, have the consolation of virtue. We have seen within feminism a re-emphasis on conventional ideas of fundamental and comprehensive cognitive, emotional and moral differences between women and men. Carol Gilligan, for example, voted Woman of the Year by *Ms* magazine in 1984, draws upon Chodorow's work to argue in her book *In a Different Voice* that women's moral development is distinctly different from that of men. Women employ more concrete categories of moral reasoning and display greater compassion and empathy than men, showing a concern for the individual over any great cause or principle.

Always? We can but wonder what women were up to pinning white feathers on faint-hearted fighters throughout WW1, while the behaviour of hundreds of thousands of Italian women, who joyfully donated their gold wedding rings to Mussolini in the Thirties to be melted down for armaments and proudly sacrificed their sons to die for the fatherland, is, like much else in women's history, simply ignored. The problem is that Gilligan writes of stable internal personality differences between women and men, when, if she is revealing anything, it is something about the effects of specific social practices in specific contexts. She also employs a methodology which, like all pre-feminist research on 'sex differences' before the mid-Sixties, is designed to exaggerate difference between women and men and disregard similarity.

Price of caring

But any feminist prospective which explains women's mothering and caring work in exclusively psychological terms obscures the possibility that there may be no such universal or straightforward nurturing femininity at all. Women's mothering capabilities, when present, may be primarily their adjustment to the social and economic arrangements which require them to do the work of caring for others. Such psychological perspectives also tend to obscure not just the possibility but the gloomy probability (once so ardently proclaimed in feminist writing) that women's caring work in our society is often stressful, isolating and undermining of personal confidence. And, while this painful reality is less prominent in feminist writing today, it is ironically now all the more prominent in studies of women's actual experience of mothering.

All the studies which have been undertaken on the effects of isolated mothering confirm that earlier feminist anger. George Brown and Tirril Harris, for example, found that mothers alone with small children were the group most vulnerable to depression: women who have to spend long periods of time with young children, alone and without breaks, are likely to be irritable and emotionally unstable. In a recent study of women with pre-school children, *On Being a Mother* (Tavistock), Mary Boulton found that although two-thirds of the mothers in her sample found a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives as mothers, half of them nevertheless found childcare a predominantly frustrating and irritating experience. Although this sample of mothers were all living in 'good' social conditions (with husbands, adequate financial support and without the demands of a full-time job) the majority felt overburdened, guilty and anxious. The women who felt 'fulfilled' in their role as mothers were balanced by an equal number who felt 'alienated'.

Much of the feminist mothering literature has proposed shared parenting as a solution to the problems of women's mothering - problems seen by them as the creation of men who are frightened of intimacy, cannot care for others and need to dominate women. But shared parenting, although a superficially appealing solution to the tensions of full-time, isolated mothering, is simply not an economic possibility in most households with children. Nor would it necessarily overcome the feelings of isolation, monopolisation and loss of individuality — which so many of the mothers in Mary Boulton's study reported — if each parent were still alone in their child-minding. Shared parenting does involve the important ideological work of changing the ideals, attitudes and skills of men (though there is little evidence, where it now occurs, that it changes the power relations between such men and women more generally). But in the short term the demand for increased provision for childcare, and building up networks of supportive people, would appear more immediate and practical solutions for the problems most women face in mothering.

It is important to involve men in childcare, and such involvement does not prevent struggle on other fronts. But I would endorse the doubt so forcefully elaborated by Denise Riley in *What Is to be Done about the Family?*: 'What tends to happen in practice, given the utterly miserable outlook for social provision for childcare to be extended or maintained under present conservative policy, is a loss of heart for reform in the public domain.' And this loss of heart can find its consolation in the false promise that we can sidestep more public political engagements (so often ill-rewarded) by overstressing the transformative nature of our own more radical parenting arrangements.

Some of my feminist friends, grieving — like me — over the loss of our once needy children into a more autonomous young adulthood, or else hastening at the eleventh hour to give birth, assure me that mothering has proved the single most engaging experience of their life. I can agree; and yet I know that it is also true that those feminists now suggesting that it is motherhood, and women's repossession of their bodies, which holds the key to women's happiness and the transformation of life generally, are endorsing a worrying retreat from public political struggle, the very struggle which might transform the grim reality faced by so many women, whether mothers or not. □

Lynne Segal is the editor of What Is to be Done about the Family? *(Penguin, 1983). Her most recent book*, Is the Future Female?: Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism *will be published by Virago next month.*

'Mmm, lovely dear, but wild red just isn't your colour'

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ARTS

ART

The show's over

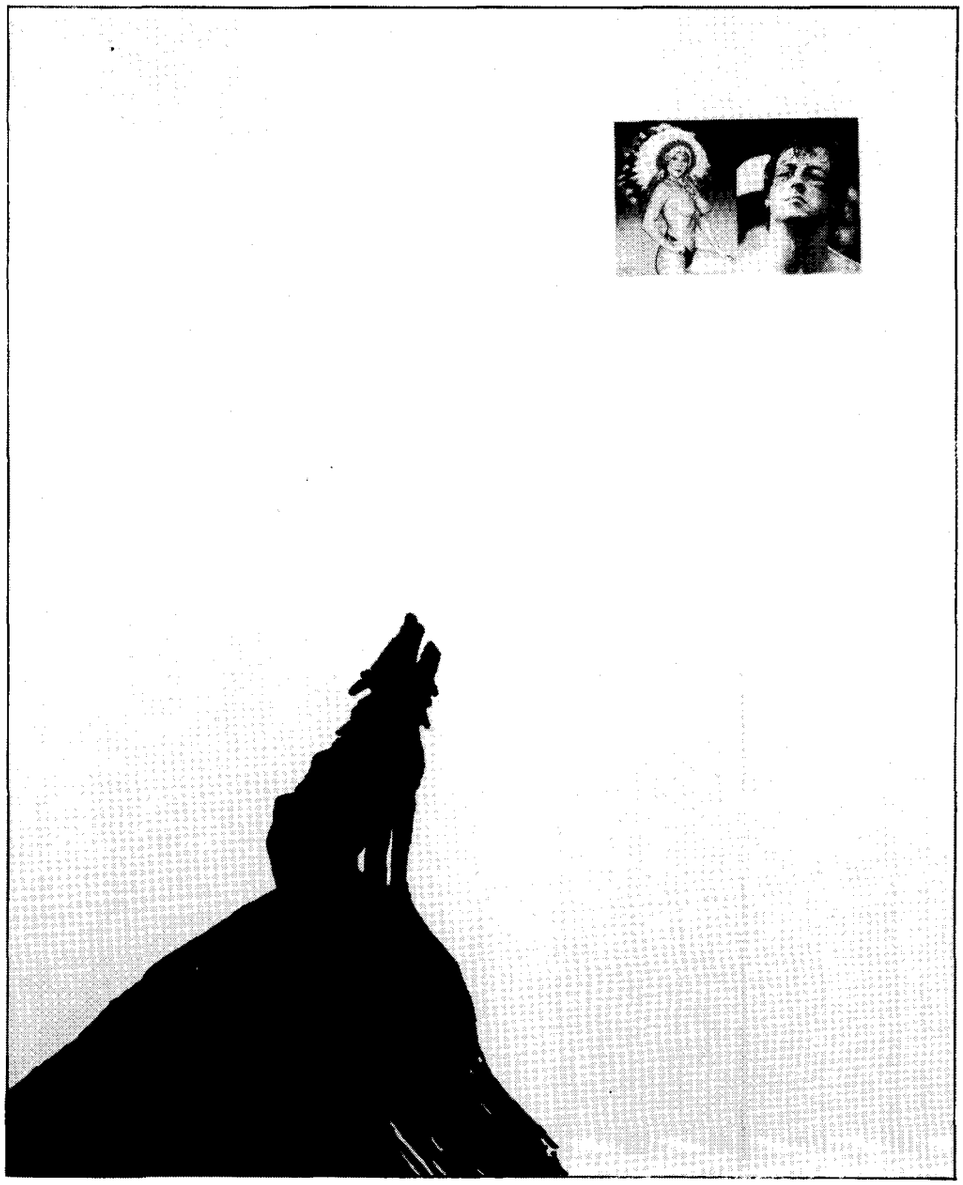
Mo Dodson

The Ruins of Glamour, the Glamour of Ruins
Chisenhale Studios

GLAMOUR, according to John Berger, is the power to provoke an envy that obscures the need for political action in a capitalist-consumer society. *The Ruins of Glamour* . . . seeks to broaden that definition by using theories of desire and sexuality which emerged in the late Seventies. The exhibition's art-practice, though, owes more to Sixties' projects, to Fluxus and even the Situationist International.

The version of the exhibition I saw was a partial reconstruction of the original, kindly arranged by the organisers, Glyn Banks and Hannah Vowles. For, by the time I got to Chisenhale Studios, 'cultural terrorists' had already vandalised the installations by aerosoling slogans — 'another radical wank', for example — on the wall-paintings and tipping over various objects. Some might say that if you refer to the self-destructive art of the Sixties and to the political interventions of the Situationists, all of it spiced with hints at post-structuralist 'deconstruction', then you shouldn't be too surprised if someone else intervenes and does a little deconstruction of their own. Vowles and Banks say that if the interventions had been more to the point they would have kept the exhibition open so that the vandalism could have been seen as part of the show. As it is, *The Ruins of Glamour* . . . was closed less than a week after opening. Seen from the perspective of May '68 — the situationists' 'finest hour' — the whole episode could be seen as a storm in an ivory tower tea-cup.

But the *Ruins of Glamour* . . . in fact attempts something very different from Sixties' political action-art. Like much of the art that has been influenced by the debates between marxists and post-structuralists — Victor Burgin's work is perhaps the most obvious benchmark in this area — this exhibition seeks to engage with a set of contemporary discourses that cross over the boundaries between words and images, criticism and practice, nature and culture, gender and class, pleasure and social structures of power. An implicit assumption of the exhibitors seems to be that theoretical reflection is in itself a kind of political practice. Going around the exhibition was therefore very much like attending a seminar in which the discussion was conducted by means of visual conundrums and images that evoked responses and then negated them. Generally, the installations succeeded in making me rethink the ways in which glamorous images from both popular and high culture determine my subjective experience, especially my experience of those objects of desire that have ruled so much of my behaviour.



Edward Woodman

Well, they're enough to make anyone howl: from an installation by Art in Ruins and Tom McGlynn at Chisenhale

The key-note of the exhibition was Vowles and Banks' wall-painting showing the 'personification' of glamour — an enlarged replica of one of the heroines from a comic strip in a daily tabloid. Topless, with perfectly formed breasts and immaculate coiffure, this popular image of what all men desire strides towards us from a burnt-out forest. In the next section, the same heroine stands in the same pose in front of city buildings that appear to be burning. Finally, she stands facing us, again in the same pose, greatly enlarged and alone. At a simple level, this work can be read as saying that the glamorous objects of desire presented to us by the media distort both our perceptions of nature and of each other. With their power to stimulate and paralyse through spurious promises of a 'natural' perfection, these images can destroy us. Glamour, in a phrase, creates ruins.

But ruins can also be glamorous — Karen Eliot's painting of a junkie shooting up shows us a ruin of a person portrayed as a glamorous media image. Lack of space precludes mention of all ten artists contributing to the show, but particularly effective for me was Baxter, Dickason and Hopton's 'Seasonal Desires', a floor installation of tall rocket-like stakes set on a spiral of coal evoking connections between a phallocentric ideology of glamour and the destruction of 'nature'.

In the end, however, I was left feeling that in spite of the thought that went into the works the achieved meanings were relatively lightweight. Most of the theoretical content could have been as easily delivered in an illustrated seminar — and

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indeed the catalogue is 48 pages of theory. One of my favourite lines from this is by Stefan Szczelkun describing his own work: 'An arrangement in 9 sets of 9 acknowledges Hegel's release of Art from the service of knowledge.' When exhibitions ascend to this level of esotericism, it is time to ask who is supposed to be attending them. Even if the reference to Hegel is a joke (like the table of contents which lists non-existent chapters and a total of 280 pages) the uncertainty introduces the type of empty ambiguity and mystification for which the avant-garde has so often been criticised. The refusal to stand in one space of meanings is the last resort of an avant-garde running away from political responsibility; no matter how many post-structuralists tell me that the self is decentred, that acts of communication are poly-semic and inter-textual, there is still a point when the subject has to stand firm and take responsibility for his/her achieved meanings.

But in case I seem to be agreeing with the 'cultural terrorists', I should say, overall, this was a refreshing and optimistic exhibition. Beyond the mountains of oily trivia in the West End galleries, here at least was a group of cultural workers trying to deal with politics, and with the relation of their own medium to physical and ideological violence. □

The Ruins of Glamour, Glamour of Ruins *will possibly be on show in the Transmission Gallery in Glasgow in May.*

MUSIC

Madonna and youth

Jon Savage

MOST SUCCESSFUL POP records work on a strict principle of repetition. Like any basic ritual, the potency of a hit single grows from the endless reiteration achieved by its being played on radio, TV, in the disco or in the home and — as befits the nature of our society — from its very mass production.

Repetition also occurs in the structure of a successful song, usually through a metronomic rhythm (particularly when provided by a drum machine) and the familiar verse/chorus sequence. This is the song's outward layer. But in the best pop songs there lies a buried hook — a phrase, an instrumental line or even a nuance — which, in acting against its overt structure, acts as the song's deeper, real centre.

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Madonna's 1985 hit, 'Into the Groove', is a good case in point. Taken from the soundtrack of the successful film, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, it's an excellent example of the breezy, assertive style that has become Madonna's trademark. The song's structure is fairly simple; its basic tension is drawn from the contrast between the simple, heavily accented beat, some slightly fussy instrumental fill-ins, and Madonna's projection of two voices: low and husky, high and excited.

'Into the Groove' is a basic come-on: a dance song with lyrics — 'We could be lovers if the rhythm's right' — that describe the experience to which it is meant to provide the perfect accompaniment. As you get deeper into the song, the verses pick out the difference between private fantasy and public fulfilment that is the pay-off: 'I'm tired of dancing here all by myself/Tonight I want to dance with someone else.' The tension is wound even tighter; you begin to await the resolution set up by all this aural foreplay.

The key part of the chorus deals with the moment when Madonna crosses the line between fantasy and reality and puts desire into practice. 'Touch my body and move in time/Now I know you're mine,' she commands. On the second time this occurs, she repeats the second phrase, 'Now I know you're mine'; there is a sudden break in the music's relentlessness, some sudden depth and space. She repeats the phrase again. On the fourth time, she trades, without warning, her husky whisper for a high, keening wail that splits the song wide open: its hook is a brilliant evocation of desire.

At first, Sonic Youth's cover version — called 'Into the Groovey' — comes off as a poor art-rock pastiche: the so-called 'avant-garde' using references and irony in a mocking yet parasitical relationship to the mainstream. It employs most of the standard tricks: fuzz guitar, doomy punk bass and harsh, distorted vocals. The tempo is slowed right down: what once swung is now a subterranean thrash, delayed even further by some heavily echoed, obtrusive percussion.

And then a similar alchemy takes over. About two-thirds of the way through, Sonic Youth strip away each instrument until only the bass is left, resonating: again, there is some sudden space in the murk. The song then goes off onto a different tack: the other instruments come in quickly as the tension builds. It is here that Sonic Youth pull off their masterstroke: at exactly the same point in their version of the song, they drop in Madonna's voice singing the key refrain 'Now I know you're mine'. The first, husky-voiced intrusion sets you up for the same keening wail that splits 'Into the Groovey' as surely as it does the original.

'Into the Groovey' is that rare thing: a cover version of a song that has been already recorded in a definitive version, which nevertheless gives it a new meaning. In this respect, Sonic Youth have pulled off an exemplary piece of musical pop criticism: they've isolated the key moment in the Madonna original and transposed it into a new context where its apparently uncomplicated lust is seen in a more sombre, some would say suitably troubled light. As good fellow New Yorkers, Sonic Youth know that Madonna's innocence is highly constructed, yet they are not immune from an innocence of their own: 'Into the Groovey' is a fans' tribute from people who still believe in an avant-garde. □

TELEVISION

Class of their own

Hugo Williams

POOR JACK ROSENTHAL can't have known he'd be up against the last episode of *The Singing Detective* (BBC1) when he wrote his pre-Christmas story **A Day To Remember** (C4), or he'd have done himself a damage. His title is a pun. Whereas *The Detective* is about memory and its perversions, Rosenthal's play is about forgetfulness and its terrors. Wally (George Cole) has had a stroke and can't remember what he just said or ate. He and his wife Hilda are staying with their daughter for the holiday and Wally is left alone with his son-in-law Graham while the girls go out shopping.

In life this would be one thing, a quiet morning at home fixing the Christmas tree lights; in a play, confrontation and hellishness are required to keep us amused.

Instead of showing patience or a little Yuletide charity towards the old fool, Graham practically has a nervous breakdown trying to reassure him that he has already had his breakfast or read the paper. When Graham comes back from the lavatory, Wally says, 'Morning Graham. Sleep well?' which makes Graham, for some reason, cry instead of laugh.

There was horror to be gleaned from the situation — 'I don't know if I've been here for a week or two weeks. I don't know where Hilda is.' — but George Cole wasn't the man to glean it. His is a character actor's talent, too broad, comfortable and theatrical to mirror inner turmoil.

He did what he could with the reminiscence about a war-comrade — ending it splendidly with 'Well, what about him?', as if Graham had introduced that far-off subject — but his slight ability was stifled by seriousness. As we have learnt from Alan Ayckborn, suffering must be comic if it is not to become insufferable.

The story has a rather silly climax, with inspirational music overlaid, in which Graham hits on the idea of a tape recorder to solve Wally's memory problems. They go out and buy one and forget to pick up the children. For the first experiment, Wally records a long, sub-biblical, faux-working-class tribute to Graham's kindness, having already forgotten the purpose of the machine.

'He's got one of those at home,' says his wife when she gets back. 'He forgets to use it.'

I have the feeling there was something psychological going on behind all this, like there's supposed to be in fiction: spontaneous amnesia induced by marital frustration or something, because Hilda has her own form of maddening absent-mindedness, possibly induced by his, but this is not a plus in my book. Too algebraic.

One other thing. The play might have been all right if it hadn't been written in that awful tele-working-classese beloved of TV and radio dramatists and probably derived from early Pinter rather than life. It's hard to describe exactly, but

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you can hear it in a line like 'I'm not bothering with the greenhouse next year — greenhouse, I'm not bothering with it.' Mimicry is not a skill many actors possess and you only have to listen to Forties cockney interpretations to hear how ours will sound in a few years.

How many actors — George Cole not excepted — have you seen strangely up-graded but shorn of all their good lines when appearing too confidently on television chat-shows? In this context I should mention June Brown, who ventured on to the set of **Wogan** (BBC1) last week and managed to go on being Dot for the customers, even without her *EastEnders* accent, a remarkable performance.

The meaning of **Redbrick** (C4), the old class-conscious word for a non-Oxbridge-type university, has shifted since the arrival of the new concrete campuses. It now means more exactly what it says, but still seems to require official caution and reverence when it comes to making a documentary on the subject. Why is it that such caution was thought unnecessary in the making of similar fly-on-the-wall series such as *Public School*, a brilliant scandal-sheet about Radley (of which I remember one girl's rush to get home to take her pill after the school outing) or *Queens, a Cambridge College*, which out-did itself in natural self-satire? Obviously there is some residual, inhibiting inverted snobbery on the subject of provincial universities and this was not helpful in the making of *Redbrick* — which did, however, accurately portray the monotony, conformity, pomposity and narrow-mindedness of university life.

'Cuts' was the only four-letter word and this hung like a sword over everyone's 'tenure', calling that reassuring concept into question at long last: 'There are people working in universities who would never be employed today,' said a lecturer, 'blocking the way for more talented younger people . . .' It was about as rude as anyone was allowed to become. 'Replacement freeze', 'natural wastage' and 'early retirement' were the euphemistic blights or avenging angels, depending on your point of view. 'I give you graduating day!' said the Dean, as the cameras panned students dossing on the Green for that occasion. 'If you have access to a politician, I hope you will plead our cause.' 'Bit heavy, wasn't it?' said a student, but his parents disagreed: 'It was nice, actually. You can write a letter to your MP when you get home, can't you.'

I felt sorry for Simon Eliot of Islamic Studies, betrayed by the Saudis, who pulled their funding on his department, but Simon has a second career as a novelist lined up and looks forward to 'no longer spending an hour in silence with students who have nothing to say'.

We attended a theoretical physics class and heard a don speculating that life had originated in a black hole, which reminded us of what another teacher had been saying: 'Universities are a bit like black holes, difficult to get out of, but there is really no reason why people have got to see it through to the end of their days.' What would a theoretical physicist do in the outside world? somebody wondered. 'Go into entertainment,' came the non-ironical reply.

The series could have used a much more jaundiced editorial policy, however. One makes the adjustment to reality easily enough, should one need to. □

MUSIC

Dividing the spoils

Andrew Clements

The perennial debate over financing Britain's symphony orchestras has suddenly boiled over

TEMPERATURES BEGAN to rise with the leak from the Arts Council that there was a plan to augment the funding of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, to bring it up to world class. Then André Previn announced that he could no longer justify his title of musical director of the Royal Philharmonic and would henceforth share responsibility for the orchestra with Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Soon afterwards, Claidio Abbado made it known that he would not be renewing his contract with the London Symphony when it expires in 1988 and, most recently, the London Philharmonic floated a plan for amalgamating its administration with that of the Philharmonia, an overture that was immediately rejected by the Philharmonia's management.

Not all these events are of equal significance, though they are all symptomatic of a general unease with the way in which British orchestras are managed and funded, and of the realisation that, as Arts Council money gets ever tighter, something radical will have to be done if standards are to be maintained at even their present level. Abbado's departure from the LSO was the least surprising; his involvement with the orchestra's policy making has become more and more tenuous and standards have plunged. Day in, day out, there's no doubt that the LSO is now the least accomplished of the London-based bands.

That taking the title of musical director implies something more than that of glamorous figurehead lies behind Previn's sensible decision. He realises that he cannot effectively oversee the full range of the RPO's activities or shape its concert-giving as he feels he should, and has been very lucky to find in Ashkenazy a colleague with whom he can work closely and amicably. That kind of co-operation between two top-class conductors, however, is likely to be exceptional.

Certainly London orchestral players have a hard time in comparison with their Continental counterparts; they are forced to give too many programmes to make ends meet and, more often than not, are given inadequate rehearsal conditions. It's hard to escape the conclusion that there are too many symphony orchestras in the capital trying to attract audiences, or that, with three rather than four orchestras sharing the subsidy, standards would not commensurately rise. So many concert programmes now have a routine look, with the orchestras caught in the same jet-set trap as the Royal Opera, with star conductors and performers dropping in to give one or two concerts without any chance to build a relationship with the players, and no one around concerned with their problems.

It's ironic that the one orchestra given the opportunity to break out of this vicious circle has totally failed to do so. When the Barbican opened, and the LSO became its house orchestra, there seemed a real chance that having a 'home' and a rehearsal centre would really help the orchestra to excel. Instead it seems merely to have hastened the decline.

Alone of the London orchestras it has been the LPO under its new management that has proposed any radical changes in the way orchestras are managed. They have at least realised that the new administration of the South Bank means business and that, if they want support and encouragement, it would be prudent to go along with any ideas for concert series that might be suggested. The idea of a partial union with the Philharmonia was, I suspect, a canny bit of kite-flying, aimed at an orchestra that is undoubtedly the LPO's main rival, its chief competitor not only for audiences but also top conductors and orchestral players. Yet it does show a willingness for change that has not characterised London orchestral management before.

The position in Birmingham is different again. Under Simon Rattle the CBSO has been shaped into as good an orchestra as can be found in this country, at its best excelling anything the LPO or the Philharmonia can achieve. Its new eminence is partly due to Rattle himself — to his exceptional talent and his willingness to do the full job as musical director, concerned as much with his players' working conditions as with the planning of their concerts — and partly the result of the way in which the CBSO gives its concerts, which is much more akin to the system that operates abroad.

Each CBSO programme is rehearsed thoroughly and then repeated several times — not just in Birmingham but throughout the Midlands, and then often again in London. There's a better chance for instrumentalists to get to know their repertory and concerts really can concentrate on interpretation and presentation.

Rattle would be the first to admit that person for person his players are not as accomplished as many of their London counterparts, but they play like a committed and unified group of musicians, not under pressure to accept every scrap of work that comes along just to keep going. And, because the CBSO has built a faithful audience in Birmingham, its programming has become under Rattle much more adventurous, putting on the kind of mixed programmes that London orchestras avoid at all costs.

If, therefore, the pursuit of orchestral excellence is really one of the Arts Council's priorities — and Britain should be able to boast of an orchestra to put alongside the Concertgebouw, and the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics — then Birmingham is the obvious place to put this extra funding; where that money is coming from, though, and whose throat will be cut to provide it, is another issue. The sums involved — half a million pounds was the figure quoted — are not enormous by European standards and I doubt that they would set a London orchestra on its feet by themselves.

But in Birmingham, because of the way the orchestra is already structured and run, they could have a dramatic effect, accelerating an improvement that has already achieved hugely impressive results. □

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Books

HISTORY

Bogeymen

William Lamont

Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians
J. C. DAVIS *Cambridge* £22.50

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION of the 17th century has always exerted a peculiar grip on the imagination of the left. It was the only time in our history when we got rid of King, Lords and Bishops. It was our 1789, our 1917.

To invoke those analogies is to emphasise at the same time their limitations. It can hardly be argued that the English Revolution is in the same league as the French and Russian Revolutions. The English Republic only lasted eleven years. By 1660 the old firm of King, Bishops and Lords were back in business, even if they were running it in different ways. But, paradoxically, this has only strengthened its appeal to many on the left. The 17th-century failure has been seen as a failure of nerve: of acute relevance to a 20th-century party which lost its way in the late Seventies. Revolutions could be won by the spontaneous actions of the rank-and-file; lost by the betrayals of its leaders.

Interest among historians shifted from the Cromwells and Iretons who had led (and betrayed) the Revolution to the humble followers who had *made* the Revolution. Contemporary political observers were not slow to draw the analogies. Thus Tony Benn and Peter Hain, for instance, saw the Levellers as the founders of the Labour Party. Benn and Ken Livingstone took part in the celebration, organised by *History Workshop*, of the Leveller Army mutiny put down by Cromwell's officers.

There was, frankly, always a problem with sources. Leaders leave diaries and memoirs. The voice of the common people is much harder to catch. The most radical groups — Levellers and Diggers — were numerically insignificant. Indeed, recent research has established convincingly that the most successful mass movement in the Civil War — the nearest we came in the 17th century to a Peasants' Revolt — was the Clubmen, and *its* roots were neutralist and localist.

The problem seemed to have been solved, in 1972, with the appearance of Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down*. A great historian achieved a remarkable feat in recreating the underground world of the English Revolution, in which Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, Muggletonians, Quakers (a much rougher crew than their admirable 20th-century descendants) expressed their individual views in a milieu which, for the first time, gave them an intellectual coherence.

Professor Davis' researches on the Ranters in *Fear, Myth and History*, only one small part of that ambitious structure, do not in my view detract from that immense achievement; they do, however, need to make us think again about the relevance of the 17th-century experience for 20th-century politics.

Christopher Hill has himself thought again. In a characteristic piece of self-criticism, he has recently argued that in *The World Turned Upside Down* he overplayed the sexual element in the Ranter story. That element was given, in my view, too much frontal exposure in Keith Dewhurst's free adaptation of Hill's book at the Cottesloe in 1978. Indeed, in an article which will be appearing shortly in *History Workshop*, I argue that the effect (though obviously not the intention) of such presentations is, ironically, to trivialise the Revolution, to play into the hands of right-wing detractors by making it appear the playground for spontaneous nutcases.

And it is unfortunately true that Hill and,

Transformations

As a child
I did everything
possible,
not to be
like my mother.
Family Romance?
Cinderella,
Ugly Sister, Fairy –
I tried them all.
On the other hand
(now using my brains)
I still try to please
surrogate daddies.
Again, I fall.

Ageing, angry,
alone, ill,
I regard
the constellation
of imaginary selves.
Finally, with joy,
I picture
my dead parents.
In memory
I can be them,
Moving beyond
the past
I become

My own parent.

'We should use photos to ask questions rather than to try to show facts,' remarks Jo Spence half-way through PUTTING MYSELF IN THE PICTURE (Camden Press, £8.95). It's only her later work that she now places in the full light of this awareness: her investigation of family myths through fairy tales, her struggle with illness and self-healing in phototherapy and 'The Picture of Health?' exhibition. But the questions are posed with remorseless energy all the way through this photographic autobiography, as it plots the author's progression from high-street photographer via social documentarist to photo-activist and, now, exponent of a combative radical amateurism. If her creative refusal to accept photography's public and private fictions has led to some painful and disturbing images, these unblinking self-portraits also prompt admiration and offer an argument for the strengthening and healing power of self-exploration through the lens. Jo Spence's final message is that anyone with a roll of film to be processed at the local chemist can turn the camera into a potent instrument of personal and political inquiry. Likewise, the family album, with its innocent snapshots, becomes a time bomb whose sealed off emotional histories are there to be prised open. (Liz Heron)

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before him, A. L. Morton (whose pioneering work on the Ranters has been generously recognised by Hill) are dependent upon dubious right-wing propaganda for much of the material we have on the Ranters. As for the Ranters' own writings, when Nigel Smith brought them all together for the first time in 1983 in one volume, they made a pretty meagre harvest: Coppe, Clarkson, Salmon, Bauthumley: Bauthumley, Salmon, Clarkson, Coppe. That was bad enough, but when we actually examine what they say, we find that most of Coppe is taken up with retracting the lies that enemies wrote about him. Clarkson as a source is even worse. He wrote his *Lost Sheep Found* in 1660 to do dirt on his former Ranter associations: it's like turning to Paul Johnson *now* for a view of what the *New Statesman* stood for ten or 15 years ago.

But we all persisted in the view that there was a kernel of Ranter writings, even if it was difficult to locate. This is the measure of Davis' originality in this new study of the Ranters: *he convinces us that they never did exist, except in the eyes of their enemies*. 'Ranterism' existed, of course: a state of mind in which the Calvinist idea of election is taken to its logical (if absurd) conclusion. The saint is absolved from moral restraints, can kiss any pretty woman that he sees, renounce private property and still have his guaranteed place in heaven.

Contemporaries had no doubt about the gravity of the problem that Ranterism presented. Richard Baxter was a contemporary who believed that it was *the* major crisis of his times; but he was vaguely troubled that he had never actually met a Ranter. Winstanley blamed the Ranters for wrecking his agrarian commune. But Davis' cool analysis makes it difficult to sustain the belief that there was a serious, identifiable Ranter movement. He shows that there was a serious, identifiable *anti*-Ranter propaganda drive at one limited point in the English Revolution, and how the perpetuation of the Ranter myth was vital for leaders of radical groups who wanted to make their movements respectable. George Fox did it for the Quakers: James Naylor, who rode into Bristol on an ass, became the 'Ranter' scapegoat. Lodowick Muggleton did it for the Muggletonians: his co-founder, John Reeve, became the fall guy.

Davis' last two chapters are entitled 'Explaining the Ranter myth' and 'Explaining the historians'. I find, as I've indicated, the first totally persuasive; I am less happy with the second. But it is the second which is likely to have the most pervasive influence. Davis argues that it is the Marxist background of Morton and Hill which led to their credulity about the sources. He makes great play of their membership of the Communist Party Historians' Group between 1946 and 1956 and, by association, E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* becomes linked to a common purpose to impose a false English cultural tradition on popular movements. There are enough Cold War ideologues around for whom these views will be manna: recently Professor Elton argued that the whole of European history would have taken a different (one infers better) turning if Hill and Tawney had never written a word.

It would be tempting to reject Davis' explanation of the Ranter myth because one doesn't like his explanation of the historians. And it would be wrong to do so. One can accept the one without accepting the other. Marxists and non-Marxists, we all got it wrong about the Ranters. We got it wrong because we approached the evidence with a false 'set'. The value of high class investigative work like Davis' is to make all of us examine our preconceptions. And this should extend to the author himself. The great mid-20th-century Marxist historiographical conspiracy may have much the same reality, and lack of it, as the great mid-17th-century Ranter movement. □

LITERATURE

The voyage back

Sara Maitland

The Essays of Virginia Woolf: Vol 1; 1904-1912
ed. ANDREW McNELLIE *Hogarth* £20
Virginia Woolf and the Real World
ALEX ZWERDLING *California* £21.25

HOW CAN ANYONE review Woolf any more? The adored, righteous and, as a novelist, substantially unread Virginia. I cannot but think of Michelene Wandor's wonderful poem in *Gardens of Eden*, 'Letters to Virginia Woolf':

> My dear Virginia,
> How dare I admit that I
> have not enjoyed reading
> your novels — indeed,
> that I have never finished any of your novels,
> except the love of my life, Orlando?

And, literally or otherwise, it is true: her writing has become not the stuff of passion but of PhD theses. Her non-fiction serves our (righteous feminist) purposes — and that which we do read is *good*, elegant and convincing, exactly what we would despise in a contemporary who could do it. Her diaries move us. Her novels, as I've said, are surprisingly little read. But her 'name liveth for ever more' and, although I'm not sorry about that, I don't like the position it puts me in as reviewer.

Virginia Woolf: better read than dead

I don't much like the position it puts *her* in, for that matter. My ghost would rest uneasy if it was pored over with the religious zeal of Andrew McNellie, whose apparent justification for publishing a £20 volume (very nicely bound and printed I should, in fairness, add) is that he has tracked down another couple of anonymous early reviews for the canon. **The Essays of Virginia Woolf: Vol 1, 1904-1912** contain just over 100 pieces of mainly literary journalism. No one would question that Woolf was a very good reader and an exceptional literary essayist, but these were written at the beginning of her career and written as a professional hack. Some of the pieces are brilliant: her response, in 1909, to a new biography of Sterne is both a delightful essay and an illuminating response to Sterne's peculiar talent. But they were occasional writings and the occasion is past. My main feeling reading them is not a fascination with Woolf but a regret that there is so little space nowadays for that sort of literary essay, which she both used as an existing form and made so specially her own.

Later she was to say that 1910 was 'a turning point for my generation', so it is perhaps interesting to notice that it had no apparent effect on her own literary prose — but only moderately so. This is a collection for the already committed or the aspiring thesis writer (who will doubtless have more fun with it than I did, picking out useful parallels with the major work which is yet to come).

So, given the odds against, Alex Zwerdling is to be admired for the extremely illuminating and thoroughly respectable job he has done with **Virginia Woolf and the Real World**. He is of course battling with windmills in one sense: contemporary readings of Woolf have long since escaped from the older Leavisite myth of her as the 'immured priestess in the temple of art — dedicated, solitary, out of touch with the life of her time' which is what he goes out to attack. Nonetheless, it is hard not to be moved by that combination of sad insanity (oh Lord how the river dripping still clings to her every word) and the turned, elegant profile of pained chastity in that most famous portrait of her. And Zwerdling is resolute against any such indulgence. He struggles to make that crucial link in her work, in any work of the imagination, between the interiority, subjectivity and unique psychodynamic of the writer, and the ideas — political, cultural, intellectual — which inform and, indeed, form that imagination.

He does this within a rather elegant format: chapters showing what were the received opinions in Bloomsbury circles on a range of topics such as class, the family, feminism and so forth, and related chapters taking Woolf's works broadly (and one novel specifically) in which a particular theme surfaces, in an attempt to show how her literary imagination mediated the ideas of her time and her own relationship to them.

He is, interestingly but perhaps not surprisingly, weakest on feminism, misunderstanding the shared roots of British feminisim and utopian socialism, underestimating

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the working-class contribution and seeing Woolf's critique of masculinity as unique rather than a part of a solidary feminist viewpoint which both served and countered the broader women's rights issues of the day. (His understanding of the politics of suffragism, for instance, is both simplistic and unfair, particularly as it ignores Christabel Pankhurst's curiously apolitical but forceful critique of male sexuality *per se*.) He is most illuminating on Woolf's pacifism, its relationship to the changing mood of the late Thirties and the increasing isolation of her views — although I cannot help but wonder whether, if I knew as much about the history of pacifism as I do about the 19th-century women's movement, he might be inadequate here, too.

Nonetheless he does expose the complex of radicalism and dependency that informed Bloomsbury and, most importantly, does not try to tie Woolf into some static credo but sees her political opinions changing under both internal influences and external circumstances. While the literary journalism of the Essays demands pre-existent adoration or nothing, Zwerdling returns me to Woolf as an interesting and important novelist and to the final lines of Wandor's poem:

Dear Virginia,
I will try Mrs. Dalloway again.
I promise. □

FICTION

Acrobat's apprentice

Richard Deveson

My First Loves
IVAN KLÍMA trans. EWALD OSERS *Chatto* £9.95

MY MERRY MORNINGS, Ivan Klíma's collection of stories that came out in this country last year, had a rather oppressed — and depressed — air. Not surprisingly, especially as his writings are all banned there, Klíma found it hard not to be infected by the daily pettinesses of life in contemporary Prague. In this new book he has a subject guaranteed to be more inspiriting: early love. And, masterfully resisting the obvious poisons of sentimentality and self-pity, *My First Loves* emerges as a triumph: attractive, humane, comic, elegiac and moving.

The book consists of four semi-separate stories, each told in the first person, each describing a stage in the narrator's discovery of love. In the first story, 'Miriam', he is a young teenager in a wartime prison (unnamed, but clearly Theresienstadt) who realises that a girl doling out milk is smiling at him, is giving him an extra ration, is hoping that he will speak. The transports are leaving for Poland; but he can't bring himself to say a word.

'My Country' is about a family summer holiday in a hot South Bohemia just after the war: the country is poised between coalition and dictatorship, the inn is peopled with characters who seduce the shy boy away from his improving 'great' literature, the doctor's wife is restless . . . 'I was stunned by the realisation that . . . she could yearn for me and make love to another and weep for another, yet that life was like that.' In 'The Truth Game' the 'I' meets a woman who is a compulsive liar. But does he have cause to complain? While she is there, she is there; once she is gone, he has lost some naive illusions — illusions about truth and seriousness, including his idealistic Stalinism. Never trust outward appearances, his father writes to him: don't repeat my own mistake. The letter comes from a prison camp.

In 'The Tightrope Walkers', finally, the narrator arrives teetering on the edge of loving someone who seems to be teetering on the edge of loving him. Is he going to dare to walk the tightrope of life? Is he going to walk it alone? The story ends with the questions unanswered.

Political themes echo through the book, like the trumpet hymn from *Má Vlast* in the second story which echoes over a lost Bohemia, 'this small, painful, blessed piece of earth'. But *My First Loves* isn't really about politics. It isn't really about love, either; or only inasmuch as love itself is also about aspiration and energy and discovery, about the pull of life as against the view from the tightrope. □

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LITERATURE

No direction home

Martin Chalmers

After the Second Flood
MICHAEL HAMBURGER *Carcanet* £16.95

POET, TRANSLATOR, critic, Michael Hamburger is one of the most distinguished mediators of German literature to a not always receptive British intellectual public. An earlier book, *A Proliferation of Prophets*, dealt with modern German literature until the Second World War. In *After the Second Flood*, Hamburger turns his attention to German-language writing after 1945.

It is not a literary history. Rather, in a series of essays and essay fragments, progressing broadly from 1945 to the Eighties, Hamburger both discusses writers and topics that interest him — Brecht as poet, the range of achievement of Günter Grass, the craft of writing poetry — and develops a number of wider themes and propositions.

He considers, for example, the difficulty of establishing appropriate literary conventions, particularly realist ones, in the face of the magnitude of the Nazi catastrophe (the Second Flood). He returns frequently to the significance of the high status of writers in German-speaking countries and emphasises the interaction of these countries' literatures. However, for Hamburger, the *key* term for an understanding of post-war German literature is 'displacement'.

As a result of the historical burden of Nazism and the war, the consequent population movements and expulsions, the permanent loss of German provinces, the continuing division of Germany and Berlin, Germany (and Austria), despite affluence, cannot find a 'normality'. Home has no certain location. One's country cannot be taken for granted. The only certain placing is in a history which must be rejected. This radical uprootedness is evident in a writer like Grass and his recreations of Danzig. Hamburger also relates the sense of homelessness to the important role played by an apparently auto-biographical writing, which slides between fact and fiction, and to the concern with precision in language, itself a suspect home. Peter Handke is an example of both these tendencies. (This theme of a lack of placement of German writers is also a reflection by Hamburger on his own displacement. As the child of German-Jewish parents who escaped to England, he was between two languages; though unlike another poet in a similar position, Erich Fried, he does not write in German.)

These are crucial aspects for an understanding of German writing during the last 40 years. *After the Second Flood* also directs attention to important authors unjustly neglected in England: Uwe Johnson, for example, who spent the latter part of his life here, and Ingeborg Bachmann. Nevertheless, there are certain problematic limits to this readable, generous and informative book. It never quite resolves whether to be a book of essays or a more general account, and it is seriously unbalanced: certain 'big names' are extensively discussed, but so are a number of relatively minor poets; writers as influential as Alexander Kluge or as uniquely forceful as Hubert Fichte go unmentioned.

Furthermore, the range of texts that we should consider to be 'literary' is presented as self-evident. But is not Adorno's *Minima Moralia* also literature, even if written by a philosopher/sociologist? Hamburger finds encouraging the recent freedom from genre restriction (as from ideological prescription), but that erosion of boundaries also affects the relationship between literature in the narrow sense and philosophy, sociology and history.

After the Second Flood also emphasises artistic autonomy in response to the catastrophes of the past and those threatening to overtake us. However, there's a level which is largely missing here: how do literary and artistic movements develop, for example? how do writers develop in and against them? Too often, Hamburger simply gestures towards an undifferentiated media pressure or to fashion, against which the writer has to assert him or herself.

In the preface Hamburger writes that *After the Second Flood* is 'addressed to the "common," "general" reader, to whom an interest in literature is, or used to be, as natural as his or her other concerns . . . and pursuits'. He fears, however, that this reader is 'obsolete or obsolescent'. I don't take such a pessimistic view. However, I do think that the expectations of the 'literate reader' have changed and *Second Flood* does not always address those expectations. □

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LETTERS

Nigel Pollitt, London SW2

Peter Kellner (*NS* 21 & 28 Nov.) makes the point that Labour's long-term recovery 'depends on its ability to provide coherent answers' to Kinnock's quest for 'user-friendly socialism'. This is only partly true. In reality, Labour's chances are no greater than the chances of socialists at large. It is up to socialists, whether or not they are party members, to construct a workable vision of socialism, one that meets all the right-wing challenges of 'what about competition' and 'what about markets'.

For 'user-friendly' socialism is not socialism. It is, exactly as Kellner and Kinnock wish it to be, modified capitalism. There is another vision, however, which neither man speaks of, and that is a 'people-friendly' socialism. This cannot, however, live under the same roof as capitalism. Its task is to dismantle capitalism. Capitalism is, by its very nature, anti-democratic and unfair. It's worth saying why, since Marx's analysis is currently undergoing a fresh verbal blast of cold war bullets.

A capitalist enterprise creates 'surplus value' or profit. This has been created by the workers but is spent by the owners and investors. Like those who bought shares in British Telecom, these people get 'something for nothing'. This is not fair. And because the workers in a capitalist business do not control that enterprise, it is undemocratic. Those in favour of capitalism say it produces wealth. This is absolutely correct. But, in order to do so, it also creates poverty. Today, most of that is out of sight in the deliberately 'under-developed' nations of the rest of the globe. In countries such as Britain, the worst effects of poverty are controlled by the welfare state and the police. Elsewhere, the CIA, local police, military police and army do the job. Capitalism will always create poverty and this poverty will always be resisted by the people who are capitalism's workers and unemployed. Their resistance will always be put down in whatever way is appropriate. That is why there is nothing socialist about the current welfare system. It was designed to keep the wheels of capitalist industry turning and that is why the Tories are unlikely to dismantle it altogether.

But Peter Kellner and Neil Kinnock are telling socialists that capitalism can stay. They are saying that the creation of poverty is morally acceptable. To do this, they keep the focus on the limited shores of the British Isles, or, at best, on Europe. Socialists must go further, and say that it is unacceptable for us to maintain poverty and repression anywhere. That may mean buying a tin of pineapples from the Philippines or a TV from Taiwan. Bob Geldof has shown that moral indignation at suffering overseas can be a powerful tool, and that many people in this part of the world have got the time and energy to do something about poverty.

So, if there are good reasons for 'people-friendly' socialists to dismantle capitalism, what will go in its place? What about the challenge of the marketplace, competition, investment, incentive and so on? Is there a world beyond the kind of feeble 'modification' outlined by Kellner and preached even less convincingly by the man for whom one original thought would be a memorable event, Neil Kinnock?

The answer is a resounding yes. For there is a socialism that is *participatory*, which exists at all levels of society, which does not depend on

electing representatives (although that would be part of it), and that, the world over, people are starting to formulate and create.

In participatory socialism, the choice is not between public ownership *or* workers' control as Kellner states, but a combination of both. 'Tell Sid' is a travesty of a socialist system whereby workers' own their own businesses, vote within their own businesses and for overall economic strategy by voting in elections for local, regional and national assemblies.

For democracy itself means rule by the people. We are ruled by those who own our labour while we possess periodic voting rights in a remote parliament. Socialism — with full participation and ownership of everything from land to launderettes — is the fullest realisation of the spirit of democracy. It is utterly inimical to capitalism, which is why it is so ruthlessly suppressed whenever it rears its head — or tries to.

A radical socialist economy offers a market that is controlled and determined by need and demand but exists within a system in which all people have the right to participate democratically. In such an economy people are not expendable labour units, to be heaped up as unemployed scrap when demand is low, but individuals empowered through their voting rights on the workplace or office floor through to national levels or organisation. Thus there would be a market both for goods and labour, but it would be owned and controlled by the producers.

The participatory socialist system of democracy will need to replace the stimulus of competition with a different motivation. It would be no good, after all, if ten electrical co-ops managed to compete each other out of business. The marketplace of capitalism is inherently destructive — seeking to eliminate competition and create monopolies while at the same time claiming to advocate diversity. The only truly diverse and inter-dependent economy is one which exists under popular control, where different businesses carve out different niches.

Under a socialist system businesses, owned by the workers, keep control of their own cash, and determine their own level of profit or surplus value. Part of this could then be pooled, as a tithe or tax, and used to fund new enterprises or to prop up those that were deemed worth supporting in times of trouble. And, since the overall systems would be one of participatory democracy, tithe levels would be set locally and nationally, by agreement.

These are only suggestions. But it is vital for socialists to produce new and workable ideas. We cannot support a system that depends on slave labour, the creation of poverty and the provision of a high-level of 'law enforcement' and criminalisation of the non-working force to create wealth for the few and the Sids.

Oliver Owen, Hove, Sussex

Peter Kellner might have made the strong point that modifying capitalism has the advantage of starting from where we are! And modification is happening constantly anyway; it is only a question of direction.

The current rules of the system are indeed rigged, and there is another sort of rigging that may be insufficiently discussed on the left. Peter Kellner quotes Miller and Estrin on capitalism being highly responsive, implicitly to what consumers want. This view may be partially out-dated, too accommodating of the opponent's standard professed rationale.

The bigger, better rig nowadays includes not just responding to demand but influencing it. The advertising industry seems to pretend that it is only concerned with healthy competition between brands, but this smacks of half-truth and needs looking at very hard. There are broader issues concerning demand trends that the admen and their allies in the magazines and elsewhere seems largely to agree about, even possibly to collude.

Since advertising power depends on wealth, small producers are often disadvanted. Here is an anti-diversity and anti-progress factor alien, as a matter of interest, to Thatcherite pretensions. By far the greatest power over the market, with all its sociological effects, is with the multinationals, whose interest in the media is significant. Yes, consumer sovereign judgement is still powerful, but Big Brother is working hard and sophisticatedly to shift the balance. BB is Thatcher's real friend; his complexion is blue-ish, not pink as so many like to make out.

Crosswords queue up

We apologise to readers that lack of space has prevented us from publishing the solutions and prizewinners to Setsquare Crosswords 1540 and 1541. They will appear next week with the solution to 1542.

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PERSONAL

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AGENDA

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BACKCHAT

FOOD

By the seaside

Colin Spencer

BRIGHTON is a town that has often drawn the day or weekend visitor into its ambivalent embrace; its combination of peeling glamour, ozone and bracing air, elegant and often dotty architecture is a stimulating context for enterprising and imaginative restaurants.

Over the years, Brighton has had many, beginning in the post-war period with the fish mecca English's, where I first ate lobster thermidor and understood that the ration book had to be an anachronism. Alas, this restaurant and other fishy places of yesteryear, like Wheelers, have become expense account rip-offs, where the fish is flabby and the sauces floury. Better by far to explore the further reaches of Kemp Town, the back streets behind the station, and trust in the expertise of the *Good Food Guide*.

Preston Street, which runs straight up from the front opposite the delicious chinoiserie of the West Pier now being restored, has been the site of the adventurous restaurant. **Chilka House** is that rarity, the dream of an independent Indian cook, Mr Ghoshal, who opened it this summer and is cooking what he rightly calls authentic Indian cuisine with the emphasis on local fish. This is a far cry from the normal Indian take-away and it has already been discovered by the *Budget Guide* which will include it in its spring edition. Ghoshal takes cutlets of halibut and salmon and cooks them in spicy sauces, sometimes with added coconut. There are all the familiar names — biriany, vindaloo — but you can taste the fiery spirits of chilli and ginger and the fruit, sour tamarind as well as other individual spices. An excellent onion and beetroot bhajee was exceptional and as light as swansdown.

Behind the station, at the bottom of the hill, an eye-catching tricolour awning signals the **French Cellar** run by Jean Claude Rozard and his wife. The restaurant is in two parts: a basement billed as 'elegant tranquillity', with mahogany Regency furniture, and the pavement-level French café where I sat, referred to as the bustle of 'La Brasserie'. In '86 it made the *Guide*, but, in the '87 edition, it has fallen by the wayside — yet both the hare and the pheasant were tender and carefully cooked to retain moisture. The hare was served with a mustard sauce, not too hot but with enough zing in it to set off the flavour. Hare, as long as it is not jugged, when the blood is used and swamps all subtlety, is a game flesh of great distinction. How apt to see a Frenchman cooking with it and showing a considered respect for its distinctness.

Rozard let himself down on the cheese board where some polythene wrapped Bel Paese nestled next to a strip of hard Brie. (I am always astonished at how, in France, the French palate will choose to eat some of its greatest cheeses chalky and unripe.) This unappetising and depressing display was all the more sad because, not half a mile away, was the Brighton **Cheese Shop** at Kensington Gardens, where a display of the best British cheeses, sometimes made from unpasteurised milk and plant rennet — Penncarreg — or made from ewe's milk — Sheviock — or goat's milk — Pancs-wsgawn — lay side by side with the great French cheeses, marvellously ripe. A splendid place to buy Christmas cheeses: a truckle of Cheddar weighing 4lbs cost £12, and the one I bought had resonant, mature flavour. Rozard was astonishingly lofty about the existence of this shop and said that, if he had a greater range of cheese, too much would be wasted. Besides, he pointed out, he could not cook with cheese as it was a vulgar American habit. Avoid the cheese, then, and choose a homemade sorbet; you will eat well and reasonably.

Back in London, some of the best cooking now available can be enjoyed at **Alastair Little** in Frith Street. They have won the *GFG* award for the Soho restaurant of the year and the food richly deserves it. Their terrines are spectacular to look at — the fish was marbled in pastel colours — as well as to taste. Their main courses range from a *bollito misto* of poached veal, beef and chicken, to stir-fried turbot or monkfish in soy sauce with shitake mushrooms. The desserts are ravishing. I had the best crême brulée for many a year and a dark- and white-chocolate truffle cake had the authentic aroma of hand-wrought Belgian chocolate. It has become greatly trendy and one serious drawback to enjoyment is that the noise level, when the place is full, is akin to a Mardi Gras party on a jumbo jet runway. You cannot even hear the sound of your own voice, let alone your companion's. Nothing can be done about the smallness of the room but something must be done in the way of floor and ceiling sound absorption. This might offend the clean austerity of the style, but better that than punctured ear drums.

The room at **Zen** is huge and luxuriously furnished with tables large enough to consume a whole wild hog in one sitting. The Chinese food at this other 'in place' is as elegant as the decor: pin-stripe upholstery, black windows of patterned glass and the solitary tulip. I wanted to try sea cucumber, but slug was off; they had had a run on it ever since the Queen's visit to China. But there were exquisite hot appetisers like stuffed crab claws and squids, fresh coriander croquettes and minced quail wrapped in lettuce.

Of the more orthodox starters, the sesame prawn fingers were the most succulent I had ever tasted, while the mussels in black bean sauce were the plumpest. Both the *dim sum* and the Peking ravioli were like puffs of east wind and some of the most delicious and elegant of dishes are those wrapped in rice paper, then poached or baked. Many of the ingredients are flown in, like the promfret fish, which is stir-fried or baked, with crispy skin and moist, white flesh tasting a little like bass. There is a large vegetarian menu offering eight treasure dofu cases, egg fried fresh asparagus and lotus roots sautéed with hot bean paste. The menu is large and varied enough to suit the most wilful of appetites; so entrancing is it that it is difficult to contain one's greed and keep the price of the meal down. Allow £12 per head, though the longer you linger, the greater the temptation. □

Chilka House, 58 Preston Street, Brighton; tel: 0273-27343.
French Cellar, 37 New England Road, Brighton; tel: 0273-603643.
The Cheese Shop, 17 Kensington Gardens, Brighton; tel: 0273-601129.
Alastair Little, 49 Frith Street, London W1; tel: 01-734 5183.
Zen, Chelsea Cloisters, Sloane Avenue, London SW3; tel: 01-589 1781.

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FIRST PERSON

Punch the clock

Geoff Dyer

'I WAS DETERMINED to see this fight . . . and see it I did, in great style.' Like William Hazlitt I turned up at my first fight — last Wednesday's Frank Warren Promotion at Alexandra Palace — full of ignorant curiosity. Between bouts I asked the bloke next to me — an ex-boxer who had been banned for scrapping outside the ring — who various people were.

'You're Press, aren't you?' he said, looking at my pass, surprised at the ignorance of the person it was pinned to.

'I'm not a boxing writer.'

'I thought there was something about you. I knew you didn't look like a boxing punter . . . There's something about a boxing audience.' He's right. The boxing circuit is a fairly tight fraternity. All the writers, photographers, managers and promoters know each other. In the expensive seats it's all handshakes and asking where so and so is. There are a lot of people around who look like they carry large amounts of cash without worrying about getting done over on the way home. Lots of fighters about, too, smiling and moving around easily. They're not that big but their clothes are cut loose: very broad shoulders and baggy trousers. It's their world and they're full of hope. On the other hand, a lot of the corner men (often ex-fighters with marks of injury, flattened noses, scar tissue round the eyes), and people in the crowd look like they've seen a lot of disappointment. Graft is what they know about. Things get broken easily but they can usually be mended. Keep at it ('Work! Work!' is the most frequent shout from the corner) and you're always in with a chance. It's a man's world as well — that's why there's a blonde in T-shirt, shorts and stilettoes holding up the round cards in the ring.

The crowd is fair, good humoured ('Put a stamp on it,' somebody shouts when a blow is telegraphed too obviously) and knowledgeable. If boxing were theatre they'd know everyone from Shakespeare to Beckett. It doesn't matter if a fighter is black; the important thing is that he's from Hackney; they'll support him against somebody from Sheffield, and somebody from Sheffield against somebody from abroad. (When Minter took a pasting from Hagler after saying he wouldn't lose his title to a black man, he blamed football hooligans for the bottles that were hurled into the ring!) You'll see more louts at an Oxbridge ball than you will at a boxing match.

The fighters made their entrance to flashing lights and pounding music so that when they limbered up in the ring it looked like we were going to see a novel form of disco dancing. And in some fights that's almost what we got. A hulk from

Salamanca 116

'Playful'

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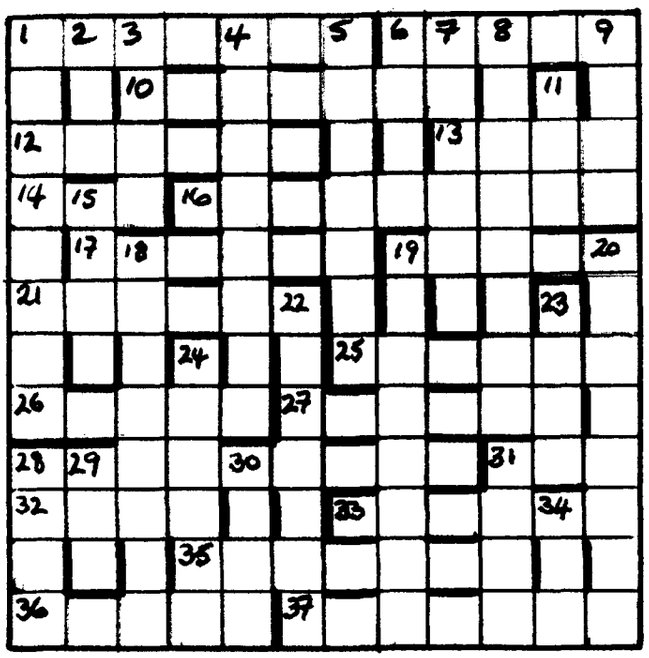


Spoof titles contain definitions and hidden jumbles of their answers, sometimes overlapping. Twelve clues define full words while leading to altered versions, each as one of a set of four and each treated in the same way, the treatment having literary connections. The ten remaining clues contain a misprint of one letter in one of their words, the true letters when read correctly providing an aid to the connection.

Name_____

Address_____

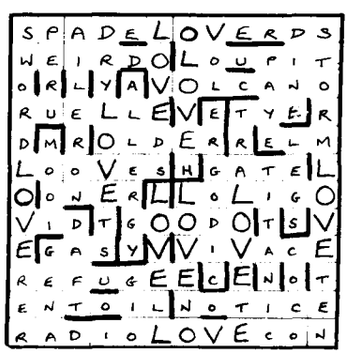
ACROSS

1 Sheep, not very old, left out on a hill (7)
6 'Taking On The Mighty Quinn' — Justus Brave (5)
10 I support the carriage: in its extremes at base of frame see me bending (9)
12 'The Stone That Fell To Earth' — Sarah Litic (6)
13 'The Blueberry Grower's Handbook' — Jan Kee Fruit (4)
14 'Fee Fie Foe Fum' — Ivor Bigge Chopper (3)
16 Defective Charlie, by name Oriental, in top league, going from West to East (9)
17 'Cards For 4 Players, Etc.' — Bridget Sirgood Game (6)
19 BBC love English that's correct? Happen (6)
21 What's for dinner (at college) had by old year? Calf (6)
25 'Service Your Car Engine' — Axel Brace, Donna Jack (6)
26 'The Steeples Are Singing' — Annabelle Chimes (5)
27 Ledge, one found among murky reeds (6)
28 Where's nice to sit in the garden? Choose French view for a change (11)
31 'A Letter From Ancient Greece' — U. Van Olden (3)
32 Chamber with round opening mostly: dread coming from it? (4)
33 'Up The Ladder To Retirement' — Alison N. Endurance (6)
35 Horses twitch legs up in it, tho' land jerkily (10) . . .
36 . . . And leap these with difficulty (9)
37 Jumpy one, turning hard bargain in venture (10)

DOWN

1 Odd patch containing rattle? Only the unwary stand on it! (8)
2 Noses, most reliable when lifted (3)
3 'Bridge: The Conventional Play Back' — Shaw Bidding (4)
4 Paul has sore bleeding once scaly (8)
5 'Explosive Hardware' — Newt (Ron Bombs) (7)
6 Each Scot has kail in a staw (4)
7 'Space Pods And What They Should Be' — Benny Fitts (6)
8 Jan's cold and hard, perhaps? You should have dressed up warmly (10)
9 'Refuse Collection' — Phil Fee-Calling (4)
11 'Where Fowl Nest' — Teresa Likely (3)
15 Withering cure (8)
18 'The Butcher's Articles' — Carver Stake (8)
19 Get brass manufactured supporting beam (10)
20 Water in chalky areas, source of river in black pipe (12)
22 One's case stranded (7)
23 'Dealing With Compound Felonies' — Lauren Order (4)
24 'Mineral Prospecting' — Abel N. Delving (6)
28 Blow from one delivers nasty shuck mostly (4)
29 'Savoury Recipes' — M. N. Eggs (3)
30 'Night Cry From The Ghetto' — Thomas Prowling (4)
31 'The Cold Breath Of Life' — Gustav I. C. Wind (4)
34 From hearth we get some heating (3)

Solution to Salamanca 114



The name Bea is substituted by the word LOVE everywhere it occurs, to celebrate a great partnership.

Prizewinner to Salamanca 114
C. I. Semeonoff (Edinburgh)

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Dartford lunged after a lanky American who skipped around the ring out of range. 'Bring on Tom and Jerry!' somebody yelled above the slow handclaps.

With the main bout between Errol Christie from Coventry and Charlie Boston from the States, everything changed. Christie's body is a dark map of muscle and the crowd cheered wildly when he got in the ring. From the bell he looked the more obviously aggressive, jabbing forward, twitching, hunting. Boston hung back, twisting and writhing out of range. Then, twice in the first three rounds, he floored Christie. He did it so casually that I didn't even see it. Christie recovered but the faster he moved the more time Boston *seemed* to have. Then, late in the fight, Boston was smashed to the floor. He got up, winked at his seconds who looked on, anxious as mothers, as Christie closed in again.

As in all sport there is a powerful visual aesthetic — bright colours, fast movement, balance, the snaking and coagulating movement of muscles — but in boxing the overwhelming impression is of an almost unmanageable amount of force concentrated into too small a space. The collision of force is both direct and highly advanced, utterly improvised within a basic structure like some destructive and relentless form of jazz. Intelligence spreads through the fighters' every muscle, down to hands and toes. The most sensitive lovers are not more responsive to each other than two boxers. Fractions of difference become so intensified as to be absolute. Luck becomes compacted into the inevitable.

And in the eighth round the inevitable occurred. Boston caught Christie twice; both times he struggled to his feet but the fight was over. This is the point to which all boxing ambition tends: bludgeoning your opponent senseless. In a perfect fight both boxers would attack and defend so absolutely that no one would get hit. The reality is messier and more painful — but what is the meaning of this refined form of violence?

What boxing is about, ultimately, is masculinity. Masculinity is not a set of characteristics but a code by which some men live. And masculinity is not just boozing, brawling and calling women cunts. It can also mean getting up when it is still dark and cold and you're groggy with sleep, a way of achieving some self-respect in the face of a reality that stunts, grinds and deforms. Women's lives are harder than men's but, historically, their response to hardship has not been formalised into an ethic, a test, a chance to prove yourself, into a configuration of measure. Within this configuration and code, with all its inadequacies and dangers, and with its final, destructive fiat that for every one who gains by it a hundred must lose, boxing is the arena and form of articulate expression. □

Geoff Dyer's book on John Berger, Ways of Telling, *has just been published by Pluto.*

New Statesman Binders

Keep your copies of the NS in good condition with a binder. It holds a half-year's copies and costs £4.50 (£8.50 for two). Send order with remittance to **New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**

Weekend competition

No 2956 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

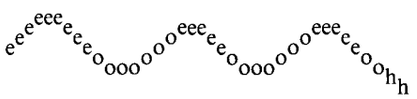
Apparently that old racist nursery rhyme 'Ten Little . . .' resurfaced on Radio 4's *Listening Corner* recently in a new form: 'Nine brothers and sisters, by the garden gate,/One went to Pony Club, and then there were eight . . .' Could we have Yuppy versions of that or other counting rhymes ('Twelve Days of Christmas', 'Green Grow the Rushes', etc), by Wednesday 7 January.

No 2953 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

What song, exactly, *did* the Sirens sing?

Report **By Gray Dorn**

I was baffled by this one too. What song *did* they sing, or what song *would* they sing? Some of you, predictably, were also baffled by the sirens: Brian Pollitt of Llandudno thought they were nuclear early-warning sirens and wittered on about wintry ages and barren fields; Alison Prince simply wrote that 'to those of us privileged (or old enough), the siren's song sounded something like this:



I disqualified them both because I'm sick to death of unilateralists and WWII nostalgia. Now, the Sirens that we meant were of course Parthenope, Ligeia and Leucosia (or Moelpe, Aglaophonos and Thelxiope, depending on one's sources), and constituted a major shipping hazard off the Sicilian coast till Ulysses intervened. As always, most entries concentrated on sexual questions, but I'm past caring. Lissa Evans wins our special first prize of the new board-game 'Artificial Intelligence' (available, to the rest of you, from A1 Games, Victory Works, Birds Hill, Letchworth, Herts, for £15 incl. p&p) and the others get £6 each. Happy New Year!

To the tune of 'That's Why the Lady is a Tramp'

Your wife went loopy; she's taken to drink.
Your ship is leaking; it's certain to sink.
Your daughter's pregnant, your son's in the clink —
We're not surprised you're looking sick.

You feel that free, fresh wind in your hair?
It's Hurricane Claire.
Feeling vague? You've got the plague!

You know that oarsman who lent you his socks?
We thought we'd tell you — he's got rampant pox.
Your rudder's snapped and you're heading for rocks.
Why not jump now and end it quick!

LISSA EVANS

To the tune of 'Sailing'

We are wailing
To those sailing,
'Don't come near! Beware of rocks!
Please don't court us,
Hades' daughters:
We have feathers instead of frocks!'

Though you hear us
You don't fear us.
You ignore our warning shrieks.
Tell us, sailors,
Are these failures
'Cos you don't know Ancient Greek?

DAVE WILLIAMS

Oh, traveller on the restless sea
Worn out by graft and penury
If to our sides you'll quickly come
We'll treat you better than your mum.

We'll feed you home-made apple pie,
We'll bring you liquor when you're dry,
We'll wash your socks and press your shirts,
We'll rub each muscle when it hurts.

Your bed will be so soft and warm
You'll soon forget each squall and storm.
With all the comforts of our home
You'll soon forget the urge to roam.

KATIE MALLETT

O, O, O, Odysseus,
We think that you're terrific,
You've knocked about the world a bit,
Your voyages are mythic,
And when you're back in Ithaca,
They will seem even mythic-er.

But in your all-male Odyssey,
You must miss out on sex,
And feel rip-off-her-bodice-y
As you pace those lonely decks,
So before you return to Penelope,
Come to us for discreet massage-therapy.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

If you're tired of pointing Percy
At the dubious charms of Circe
And old Cyclops doesn't turn you on at all,
You will find us most compliant
With your sleepy one-eyed giant —
Come and join us on the rocks, we'll have a ball!
You'll forget your fear of Scylla
When we've got hold of your tiller,
Having lashed you to a *very* knobbly mast!
And we're not just being specious
When we promise you, Odysseus,
That you'll very soon be saying, 'Home at last!'

PETER NORMAN

Fed up of ploughing wine-dark seas?
Come join us where they're brilliant blue,
A super place for super guys
Like you.

A paradise of duty-free
And singles bars and discotheques
And Neapolitan ice cream
And sex.

Just steer between those two large rocks.
That's it. Keep on, you're nicely clear.
Now, left hand down a bit — hard right —
Oh dear.

NOEL PETTY

Hello, sailors! Coo-ee, darlings!
Dying for a drop of beer?
Ready for some relaxation?
You can get it over here!

You deserve the best that's going,
You who sail the seven seas;
Think of all our mutual pleasure
And the touching of our knees!

Make a move in our direction,
Steer your ship towards the rocks —
Oh, and one thing more, my lovelies —
Don't forget to bring your cox!

NAOMI MARKS

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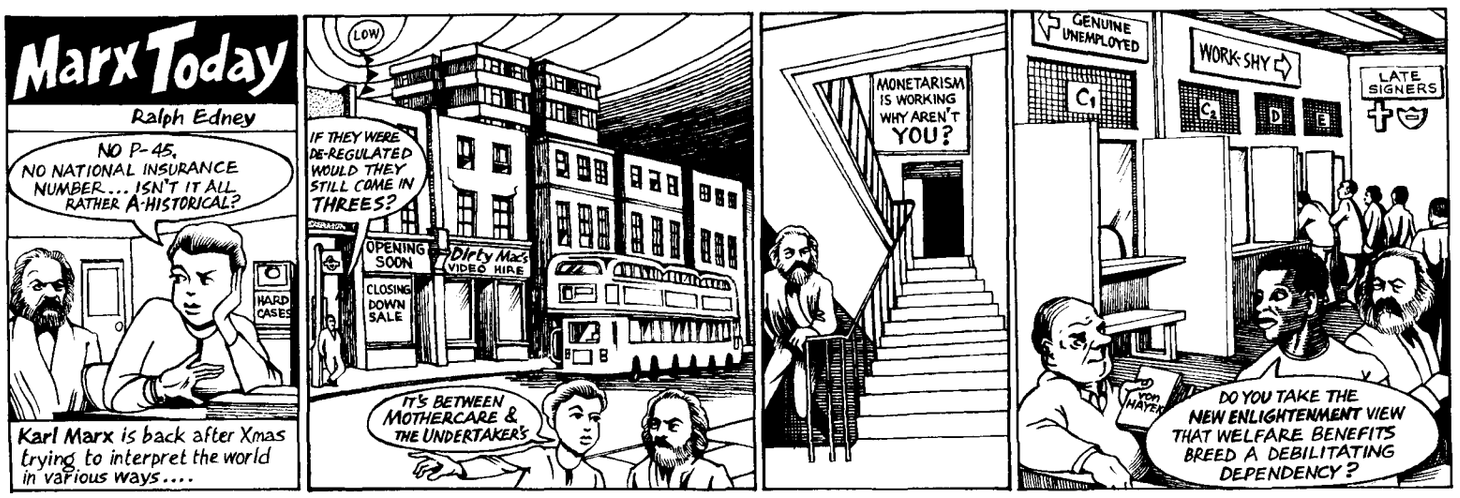
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Chess

DID YOU SOLVE As-Souli's *shatranj* puzzle? (For anyone unlucky enough to miss our Christmas double-issue the position is Red Shah/White King on b3, Red/White Firzan on c3, Black Shah/King on e4 and Black Firzan on a1. With Black to play, how does White win? The Firzan moves and captures just one square in a diagonal direction. In the notation I use 'K' for Shah/King and 'F' for Firzan.) You could have looked it up (under the variant spelling 'as-Suli') in *The Oxford Companion to Chess* (1984), in which Hooper and Whyld declare 'the solution is published here for the first time' and give: **1 . . . Kd5 2. Kb4 Kd6 3. Kc4 Ke5 4. Fb4 Kd6 5. Kc3 Kc6 6. Kb3 Kb5 7. Fc3 Kc5 8. Fd2 Kd4 9. Kc2 Ke4 10. Fc1 Ke3 11. Kb1 and 12. Kxa1.** On aesthetic grounds one can be morally certain that was not the solution originally intended and Averbakh (tackling the problem independently) discovered a better defence: **1 . . . Kd5 2. Kb4 Kd6 3. Kc4 Ke6! 4. Fb4 Kd7!**, which seems to draw. Averbakh's own solution is extremely elegant, surely a sign that he really has cracked it. The process consists in driving Black's Shah to h8 where it finally runs out of squares: **1 . . . Kd5 2. Kb4 Kd6 3. Kc4 Ke6 4. Kd4** Istanbul MS: 'Red Shah goes on fourth square of his Firzan'. **Kf6 5. Kd5 Kf7 6. Ke5 Kg7 7. Ke6 Kg8 8. Kf6 Kh8** See diagram. **9. Kg6 Kg8** To continue the dance of corresponding squares Black would need to play 9 . . . Ki9. **10. Fd2 Kf8 11. Fc1 Ke7 12. Kf5 Kd6 13. Ke4 Kc5 14. Kd3 Kb4 15. Kc2 Ka3 16. Kb1** and wins.

So perhaps that is the solution (and a very attractive one too) to a 1,000-year-old mystery, and the secret that As-Souli boasted of with such pride has finally been revealed. But modern players should not be confident that they understand a *shatranj* position as well as he did!

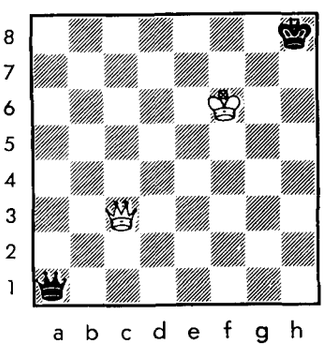
In the days of our columnist 'Assiac', the *New Statesman* used to be a showground for original compositions. One of my resolutions for 1987 is to revive this tradition by holding a competition for endgame studies. Jon Speelman has consented to be one of the judges. I hope prospective composers will start to invoke the assistance of their muse, while I work on the rest of the panel, rules and prizes.

Will 1987 be able to rival 1986 for chess events? Looking back at last year's crowded schedule, it hardly seems possible. I didn't manage to find time or space to commemorate Botvinnik's 75th birthday (17 August) or Tal's 50th (9 November). The women's world championship (another successful defence by Chiburdanidze) got completely squeezed out. I had to pass over in silence GM norms by William Watson (at Bor in October) and by Paul Motwani (playing for Scotland in the Olympiad). I didn't get to write about Nick de Firmian winning a record tournament prize in a US Open and then wondering whether it would be enough to cover the overdraft he had piled up while running round the tournament circuit. And I failed to salute Paul Buswell who retired from the post of General Secretary to the BCF after 11 years' service.

Of course there was one man who displayed a phenomenal capacity for pushing all other chess news out of print. If this modern classic from the Dubai Olympiad is anything to go by, he looks set to continue in the same vein in 1987:

Kasparov (USSR) — H. Olafsson (Iceland). QGD.
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bg5 h6 6. Bxf6 Bxf6 7. e3 0-0 8. Rc1 c6 9. Bd3 Nd7 10. 0-0 dxc4 11. Bxc4 c5 11 . . . e5 is a major alternative. **12. Qe2 a6 13. Rfd1 cxd4 14. Nxd4 Qe7 15. Ne4 Be5** Game 12 of his 1986 match with Karpov, the last to be played in London, continued 16. Nf3 Bb8 17. Qd2 b5 18. Be2 Nf6 and ½-½ in 34. In the meantime Kasparov has thought of something stronger. **16. Qh5! Rd8 17. Bf1 Bb8 18. Qa5 b6 19. Qc3 Bb7 20. Nc6 Bxc6 21. Qxc6 Ra7** Black is struggling to hold the position against the better centralised White forces. **22. g3 b5** If 22 . . . Rc7 23. Qxc7! Bxc7 24. Rxc7, and since 24 . . . Qb4 fails to 25. Rdxd7 Rxd7 26. Rxd7 Qxe4 27. Rd8+ and 28. Bd3 Black has no adequate defence against 25. Nd6 and 26. Nb7. **23. b3 Rf8 24. Be2 Nf6 25. Nxf6+ Qxf6 26. Qb6 Qe7 27. Rc6 Be5 28. Bf3 Rb8 29. Qa5 Bc7 30. Qc3 Rb6** Black has exchanged off to opposite-coloured Bishops, but is unable to break White's hold on the central files. **31. h4 g6 32. Rc5 Rb8 33. h5 g5 34. Rc6 Bb6 35. Kg2 b4 36. Qe5 Rc7 37. Rdd6! Rxc6 38. Rxc6 Qd8 39. Bg4! Rb7** Other ways to lose were 39 . . . Qd5 + 40. Qxd5 exd5 41. Rxh6 and another pawn goes too, or 39 . . . Rc8 40. Rxe6. **40. Bxe6 fxe6 41. Qxe6+ 1-0.**

The Key to As-Souli's Secret?



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This England

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A Berkshire primary school accused of playing Scrooge by charging children extra for their Christmas dinner has changed its mind. Children at Christ Church school in Reading were initially told that they could only have a special dinner if they paid extra. Otherwise they would receive sausages and potatoes. — *Times Educational Supplement* (Derek Morgan)

The sudden withdrawal of an invitation from the British Council to E. P. Thompson, the historian and peace campaigner, to go on a lecture tour in India has been condemned as political by 21 leading Indian historians. They fear that he will be replaced by 'someone boring' as happened on a previous occasion. The historian who went instead at that time lectured on The Development of Bognor Regis as a Bathing Spa. — *Guardian* (D. P. M. Salter)

Heads of governmnet of the 12 EEC member states yesterday began in London their dullest and most controversy free summit in many years. In a very real sense, the most exciting event of the day was the Queen's pre-summit lunch at Buckingham Palace, where the leaders ate breast of pheasant — shot on the monarch's Windsor estate — accompanied by mushroom sauce and croquette potatoes stuffed with spinach puree. — *Daily Scotsman* (Mary Manners Simpson)

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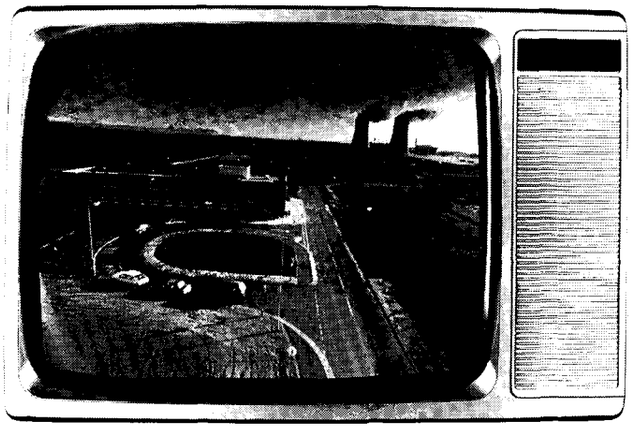

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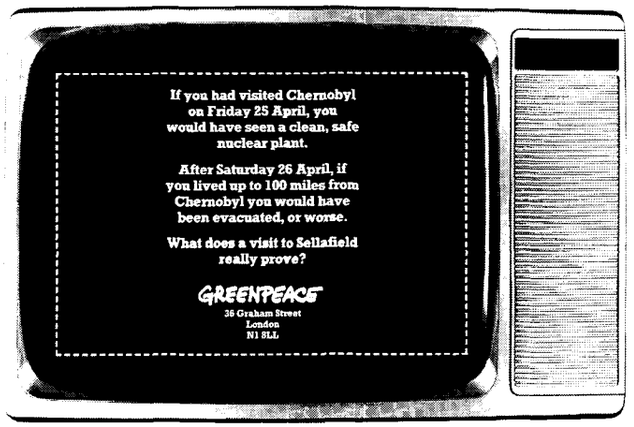
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